

**Performing Social Justice in South African Education:
How teachers negotiate the complexity of teaching
in an unequal world**

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Declaration

Submitted in fulfilment/partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Graduate Programme in Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

I, **Melanie Yvette Martin**, declare that:

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Professor Wayne Hugo

Professor Nithi Muthukrishna

Signature

Signature

Abstract

This study explores teachers' practices of social justice and equity in contexts that are steeped in historical inequality and injustice. Recognising that social justice and equity are difficult to realise but essential to making a difference in the lives of poor, marginalised learners, this study charts the lived social justice existential experiences of seven teachers. This lived social justice problematic analysed at the micro-level of the school and classroom, required a more subtle, nuanced and complex theoretical language that social justice and equity theory did not provide in consolidated form. Instead, the thesis used more finely-grained theoretical concepts to understand the complex, fraught and contested space of teachers' practices of social justice and equity.

Using a theoretical bricolage that included Boltanski, Bourdieu, Bernstein, Social Realism, and social justice theory, alongside conceptual knowledge from various empirical studies, the thesis positioned teachers at the epicentre of the research. This theoretical framing influenced by Boltanski in particular, foregrounded the voice and critical capacity of teachers. However, the complexity that surrounded their practices revealed the tensions, contradictions and difficulties that challenged and prevented them from exercising critical capacity and from being completely agential. Their inability to be agential was partly determined by structural inequality. Thus, the thesis is also respectful of Bourdieu's emphasis on the structural conditions that reinforce and reproduce inequality. Teachers' historical, social and political habitus influenced their pedagogical classroom practices as well as their personal and professional responses to learners illuminating how teachers' practices are strongly conditioned and constrained. This thesis presents unique narratives of teachers' struggles, resilience, despair, hope and perseverance, where teachers' ways of knowing and being are valued and centralised, and their pragmatic responses to learners' needs are understood.

Methodologically and analytically, a grounded theory approach, together with narrative inquiry was used in the production and transformation of interviews, field observations and lesson observations conducted with the seven teachers who taught in poor schools that comprised predominantly black, African learners. This approach, which provided the means to remain close to the data, was informed by my theoretical decision to centralise the voice of the teacher. Significant to the study are the complexities that surround teachers' identity

negotiations and re-negotiations influenced by historical, religious, social, economic, community and political dynamics.

Working within such unequal and deprived contexts teachers struggled to negotiate coherent, authentic selves and still remain responsive to their own internalised expectations and demands as well as that of learners and broader normative discourses of social justice and equity. This thesis posits a call for a re-framing of social justice and equity that is more cognisant of the complexity of teachers' lived reality. When teachers fail to successfully negotiate the complex nexus of values, emotions, contextual challenges and expectations this results in fragile, divided selves. In such an emotional landscape they are unable to successfully negotiate sometimes untenable demands and expectations, and thus experience burnout, demoralisation and disquiet. This is compounded by their own pedagogical limitations, and a lack of expertise, that reinforces cycles of failure for both teachers and learners. But despite repeated failure, some teachers experience success in significant ways that motivate teachers to continue to work in the hope that they will help learners realise successful futures of their own.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my late parents, Collin and Christine Martin. Thank you for being such loving, encouraging and amazing parents. You were a treasure in life and continue to be so in death. This thesis would not have been possible if it were not for the values that you lived, taught and shared with me.

From my mother I learned:

Despite the storms - Never give up!

From my father I learned:

Always do your best and remember you don't do it alone!

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List of Abbreviations

PGCE:	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
FI:	First Interview
SI:	Second Interview
PhD:	Doctor of Philosophy
NCLB:	No Child Left Behind
SACMEQ:	The Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
TIMMS:	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
ANA:	Annual National Assessment
MLA:	Monitoring Learning Achievement
DET:	Department of Education and Training
KZN:	KwaZulu-Natal
CAPS:	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
SMT:	Senior Management Team
IQMS:	Integrated Quality Management System
UDF:	United Democratic Front
IFP:	Inkatha Freedom Party
ANC:	African National Congress
HIV:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
LO:	Learning Outcome
OBE:	Outcomes based education
AIDS:	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
NCS:	National Curriculum Statements

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Chapter One: Introduction

“And in these times it is essential to begin with a particularly precious ideal – the belief that education at its best is an enterprise geared to helping every human being reach the full measure of his or her humanity, inviting people on a journey to become more thoughtful and more capable, more powerful and courageous, more exquisitely human in their projects and their pursuit. That ideal - always revolutionary and never more so than today – is central to achieving a democratic and open society.”

(Ayers, Quinn and Stovall, 2009, p.725)

“Thus, when we fight about education, we are indeed fighting for our lives.”

(Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 467)

1.1 Introduction

The excerpts above resonate with the beliefs and vision of the teachers who participated in this study. Whilst holding education as fundamental, especially for the poor and marginalised, it is also positioned as a difficult battle that must be waged daily. Connell (1993) indicates that schools not only distribute knowledge, skills and values, which are essential “social assets”, but that they also shape the future of society. Thus, if education is to enable all to realise their full sense of humanity and acquire the social assets that are “fundamental to what good education is” (Connell, 1993, p. 15), this thesis argues that the democratic ideals of social justice and equity must be foregrounded within teaching. In this study I narrate the stories of teachers, as they give voice to their practices of social justice and equity. Their narratives provide insight into their respective negotiations of the terrain of the educational landscape in South Africa, and elucidate their struggles to bring about enhancement, participation and inclusion.

In this introductory chapter, I provide an understanding of the focus and purpose of the study. I also provide an introduction to the respective teachers who agreed to participate in the study and follow this with an exposition of the democratic ideals of social justice and equity within policy. In order for me to understand fully how teachers have practised these ideals, I formulated research questions to guide and frame the study. Thereafter, I take the reader

through a preview of my research journey, where I provide some insight into each chapter in the thesis. Finally, I present my own story, explaining the rationale for the study from a personal perspective.

1.2 Focus and Purpose of the Study

The focus of this study was on understanding and exploring teachers' practices of social justice and equity within schooling and classroom contexts characterised by inequality and injustice. To explore this more intricately, I attempted to understand who these teachers were, and how their identities motivated their practices. Data analysis revealed that teachers' identities are constantly in the process of (re)negotiation and (re)creation, taking form from historical, personal, social, historical, emotional, material and political influences evident in their teaching realities. I recognise through personal and professional experience and knowledge that social justice and equity are difficult ideals to achieve, but are nonetheless essential to any teaching endeavour. The primary aim was to examine in all its complexity, diversity and difficulty, the work that committed teachers do, in trying to make a difference to the lives of the learners they teach. I positioned the voice and critical capacity of teachers as central to the study, so as to be able to engage in a more substantive dialogue around issues of social justice and equity. In this way, these ideals can then be reframed in more meaningful ways that are purposefully conscious of contexts. My study foregrounded the thoughts, beliefs and ideas of the teachers, who agreed to be part of the study. This is with the appreciation that any understanding of the way in which social justice and equity are practised and understood needs to come from the teachers themselves. I now give brief insight into the lives of the participants of my study.

1.3 Introducing the Participants

The teachers, who agreed to participate in this study, took me into their space for a period of 6-8 weeks (See Appendix 9). The pseudonyms used to describe the teachers were names chosen by the participants themselves. They were teachers who I believe were committed to teaching and learning and to their learners. The criteria to explain what was understood as 'committed teachers' are discussed in further detail in Chapter Four. They did not make declarations of being teachers for social justice and equity but they felt that in various ways their practices and attempts to make a difference to learners intellectually and personally were their ways of being socially just and fair. In the time that I spent with them, these teachers were always in their classrooms, punctual for lessons, and rarely absent. I often found them engaged in discussions with other teachers about their lesson plans, and ways to

improve their teaching proficiency. Both schools were situated in poor socio-economic areas. At Happy Ville Primary,¹ teachers took the time to engage with me, enquiring about my research and giving me some insight into the school. They spent their lunch breaks and free time in discussion with me about the learners and the problems that they experienced. I am grateful to these teachers, who were both inspirational to me as well as considerate of the research needs. This provided the motivation to ensure that the voices of these teachers might be heard.

Evange was the youngest of the participants. He was the only participant who had attended University and had a Bachelor's Degree and a PGCE qualification. His teaching specialisation was mathematics. He impressed the principal with his sound knowledge of mathematics and she offered him a teaching post whilst he was still involved in teacher training. Evange was also a minister, and found great joy in the Bible and the teachings of Christianity. He was a thoughtful, very serious and quiet man, who spoke with confidence and dignity. He always had time for the learners, and would often counsel learners who were experiencing problems. Despite being faced with large numbers and cramped classrooms Evange was very aware of all his learners, and could quickly follow up when "*learners performance fluctuates then that raises interest*" (First Interview).² This often meant that he would visit the homes of his learners, in order to make sense of their lives and devise ways to support them.

Ngubs was the 'marathon runner'. He had participated in the Comrades Marathon 12 times, and took part in numerous other long distance races. He was motivated to assist learners, and took time to think creatively and engage learners in outside activities, such as canoeing, which he had arranged with a local club – "*the guys down there by Camps Drift they do have all the facilities and they said: 'you can bring the kids here'*" (FI). Ngubs was 42 years old, had attended Adams College, and trained to be an English and History teacher.

Joel was the Head of Department at the school. He was 42 years old and had majored in English, History and Afrikaans. He shared that he loved teaching Afrikaans, and would have preferred to be an Afrikaans teacher instead of being an English teacher. He did lament the

¹ Pseudonym used for the school in the study.

² First Interview – hereafter referred to as (FI).

fact that Afrikaans as a language was not offered in his school, but he could understand the need for teaching other languages. He grew up in Gauteng Province, and lived with his grandmother, who was a major influence on his career aspirations. For him, the time spent teaching the learners was “*the one thing that I enjoy most of the time*” (FI).

At Sunshine Primary School,³ I was welcomed into the classroom in mid-September, and teachers kindly agreed that I could come in the following year to complete the research based on my schedule constraints. Here too, teachers were at school every day. At 7:30, every teacher would be in the classroom teaching reading in the first half hour, until 8 o’clock. Teachers were expected to be on time for teaching. The principal was trying hard to improve the standard of the results in the school, and consequently supported teachers in improving their pedagogical practice. The school had a long-standing relationship with an international non-governmental organisation that helped the school in various ways ranging from giving them computers through to installing a solar panel in the kitchen. All the teachers at the school were involved in *The Reading to Learn Programme*⁴ that was being conducted by outside consultants hired by the international non-governmental organisation. All these programmes were designed to help the learners and the teachers improve their professional and learning capacity.

Ghettoh was a 45-year-old female teacher. She was a very energetic and passionate teacher, who would sit during the break time, helping learners who needed extra help in English. She loved teaching English, expressing a desire for continuous learning; adaptation and flexibility, so as not to “*become a dinosaur*” (Second Interview).⁵ She readily embraced the constant curriculum changes, and was one of the teachers who went into the community helping with outreach programmes and drama workshops. She believed that her work was a calling, where both she and her learners were “*learning each and every day*” (FI).

B.V. was the oldest of my participants, but worked tirelessly. She had been teaching isiZulu for many years, and started teaching English in the year that I went in to do my research. She was a little unsure of herself, but for her, this was a challenge “*to do the research, to remind*

³ Pseudonym used for the school in the study.

⁴ Reading to learn Programme initially developed by David Rose and now used by Mike Hart (consultant) in various schools in the greater Pietermaritzburg area.

⁵ Second Interview – hereafter referred to as SI.

myself how was this done. You know, it is not that easy” (FI). Despite her age, and being overwhelmed by expectations of teaching, she believed that one has to grow and learn, and teaching provided her with this for *“I am learning each and every day. I am growing a lot. In teaching you grow”* (FI).

Sthe was the deputy principal at the school, and had been teaching for 23 years at the time of the research. He was very interested in the research and would stay in after school just to complete the interviews, often the last person leaving, ensuring that I left the school safely. He was a single parent, raising two children on his own, after his wife passed away. He loved teaching the learners, and felt that, *“if we could eliminate the paper work and focus on teaching the child, looking at the individual needs of the learners, then I would really, really enjoy it”* (FI). For him, teaching was both challenging and interesting.

Zippo was a 40-year-old female Head of Department at the school. She readily welcomed me into her home, and has maintained contact. She was an extremely enthusiastic teacher who worked tirelessly to help the learners and the teachers. She was very proud that the school that she was at, had a reputation for working hard, and found it amusing that teachers from outside would say to her: *“they just say – how – I don’t want to come to your school. I have heard that it is working all the time”* (SI). For her, a good teacher was someone who perseveres: *“it requires that you not be satisfied, for instance, when you give them tasks and you (they) fail, and then you say there is nothing you can do. It goes beyond that”* (FI). Zippo was passionate about the learners in the school, and despite the difficulties, she indicated: *“I do enjoy teaching the children. Especially in this community because you know it is so nice to understand the situation where learners come from and it makes you happy when you sleep in the night. Every time when you teach them, you say: ‘Oh God, thanks ’cause today I gave them this – my best, and you are sure and there is a difference. And one day they will be somewhere”* (Zippo, FI).

These excerpts provide initial insight into the personalities, identities, beliefs and emotions of the teachers who agreed to participate in this study. These statements reflect their understanding of the social, historical, cultural and political contexts of the lives of their learners, and their lives as teachers. The most basic right that these teachers serve is that of being human, and to provide the kinds of relationships necessary to ensure that learners had

access to quality education. I provide further detail of their practices in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

1.4 Background to the Study

The Constitution of South Africa Act 108 of 1996, as well as corresponding educational policy (notably the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, the Norms and Standards for Educators 2001, the National Education Policy Act of 1996), all provided legal and ideological incentive to redress previous historic inequalities and injustices. The aim of this legislation has been to improve the quality of life of all South Africans. The Constitution provides a working blueprint against social injustice and oppression, where the aims are to “heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights” (Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, p. 1), thereby protecting the rights of all South African citizens.

The first and most obvious beginning to heal the divisions and provide equality was through the building of an education system that was based on the democratic ideals of social justice and equity. For example, the White Paper on Education and Training stated quite explicitly that the government had the “paramount task” of having to “build a just and equitable system which provides good quality education and training to learners young and old throughout the country” (Department of Education, 1995, p. 7). At the time there were major policy imperatives to improve learners’ access – both physical and cognitive – through the provision of quality education as a pedagogical route out of apartheid education (Chisholm, 2003). Teachers were earmarked as being pivotal to transforming the educational landscape. Research, although limited, has come to focus increasingly on the teachers’ classroom pedagogical and educational practices of social justice and equity (Francis & le Roux, 2011). This research documents the progress that South Africa has made in relation to social justice and equity for learners. However, various scholars within South Africa have shown time and again, that the educational, political and social terrain has remained consistently scarred by inequity and injustice.

Jansen (2001) has argued quite convincingly that part of the problem is the incongruence between policy images and the professional and personal realities of teachers. Curriculum reform since the advent of formal democracy was mostly concerned with political and historical agendas, aimed at transforming the apartheid past. Jansen (2001) argues for a more

critical and comprehensive understanding of policy as an idealisation that holds the image of the teacher as one who is “preferred and cherished.” Samuel (2008) questions the validity of this image that does not position teachers as agents of change, but rather “agents to be changed” (p. 6). According to the Norms and Standards for Educators (Department of Education, 2001), teachers were expected to take on a number of roles to ensure that the democratic ideals were to be met. Teachers are expected to be amongst others “social workers, nurses, psychologists, care givers, community developers and developers of full-rounded critical citizens” (Samuel, 2008, p. 9). Samuel (2008) argues that these expectations and responsibilities are unrealistic and unattainable, where teachers are supposed to take on many of the roles usually reserved for parents. When teachers fail to live up to these idealised images and expectations, they are regarded to be at fault, for failing to provide learners with quality education. In this regard, Kallaway (2007) and Samuel (2008) are in agreement that teachers are undervalued and under-appreciated in society.

But Samuel (2008) also points to another crucial aspect to understanding the practices of teachers, and he indicates that teachers are stuck in what he refers to as the ‘victim mode.’ In this ‘victim mode’ teachers fail to take responsibility of and for their own professional development. Often teachers resort to blaming the government or outside external agencies for their inability to drive the democratic process of quality education forward. But this understanding is, Samuel (2008) argues, what reinforces the perception that teachers are in fact incompetent and this is supported in public reports of our results in national and international tests. Teachers are thus made the scapegoats, because they are unable to provide quality teaching and learning on their own.

In researching South African teachers’ voices, Samuel (2014) calls for a rethinking of the voice and power associated with teachers. For him, teachers in South Africa are mostly concerned with conditions of service, as opposed to the quality of education and responsibility for learner performance. Whilst the major unions in South Africa argue against teachers being held responsible for poor outcomes, given the lack of infrastructure that prevent the successful implementation of policies and democratic goals, Samuel (2014) challenges this fatalistic view. For the author, the voices of teachers have been powerful, but have the effect of crippling the democratic process, through both self-interest, as well as a refusal to take responsibility for their work. Samuel (2014) insists that there are committed teachers who are successful, despite vast inequality, and who have taken on the responsibility

to provide learners with access to quality education. This kind of professional puts learners' needs first and foremost. Through self-initiated professional development, teachers in small ways aim to improve their own pedagogical skills, are reflexive of their own practice, and have a hopeful vision of the future. Teachers are crucial to educational transformation and policies, and these ideals provide teachers with a goal to work towards.

It is within such a worldview that I position my research, and the participants in my study. Teachers in this study understand the huge role that they play in the lives of the learners, and whilst they do not fully meet all the ideals of social justice and equity, they possess a commitment, care and a passion towards deliberative action (Waghid, 2005). This study offers an understanding of teachers' identity trajectory as complex and paradoxical, where teachers struggle to construct a world that makes sense, and where they can make a difference in the lives of the learners. The deliberative action that Waghid (2005) discusses does not come easily, but more closely resembles that of imaginative action as espoused by Maxine Greene (1995, p.16), where teachers attempt to become aware of the "multiple voices and multiple realities" of their learners (Waghid, 2005, p. 337). It is this awareness that Waghid (2005) believes can enable social justice and equity to be realised, where teachers constantly reposition themselves in order to be responsive to learners' personal and intellectual success. Many complex factors, both internal and external, prejudice the teachers' ability to reach the ideals of social justice and equity. Despite teachers' questioning their ability and loss of control over their professional and personal lives, the teachers in this study continued to be committed to imagining and realising more positive realities for their learners.

1.5. Research Questions

Many scholars and researchers working in social justice foreground teachers as being incalculably influential in the lives of the learners and in bringing about change. In South Africa, whilst research into teachers' pedagogical practices has been done, empirical work into social justice and equity as relational concepts is not as prevalent. I argue that it is necessary to understand the practices of teachers committed to their learners' successful outcomes. I needed to understand what drives and motivates these teachers to work in contexts that lack the infrastructure needed, but who nonetheless envision something different for their learners. To this end, I was guided by the following research questions that were consequently developed to illuminate my research aim. The questions fall under a broad problematic, which asks:

What are the complexities that teachers encounter when they work towards equity and social justice?

As I engaged with the research and analysis of the data, I realised that further questions emerged that clarified the broad problematic more explicitly. In this emergent process, questions consolidated and shifted, until the following research questions were developed:

Research Question 1: How do teachers negotiate their identity within their everyday practices of social justice and equity?

This question however needed to be extended to understand the relational aspects of teachers' interactions with learners in the context of historical, social, economic and political factors. Thus the following sub-question which has two components was devised:

- What positions do teachers take up in their practices of social justice and equity and why do they take up these positions?

Research Question 2: What are the struggles, tensions and contradictions that surround teachers' practices of care and responsibility?

Research Question Three: What are teachers' pedagogical practices of social justice and equity in the classroom?

I extended this to include a sub-question that provided a clearer understanding of the complexities involved in teachers working towards social justice and equity:

- How do teachers negotiate various contextual factors and tensions evident in their classroom practices?

This study makes attempts to understand in detail the ways in which teachers work towards social justice and equity. In this way, education in general and social justice and equity in particular can be reconsidered.

1.6 Research Trajectory

In this section, I present a brief summary of the chapters, as well as the rationale for the study.

The second chapter provides a short historical account of social justice and equity that positions these concepts as a common good, meant to ensure the rights of all in society. Literature reveals that internationally and nationally, social justice and equity are widely applied and researched. I reviewed literature from various philosophical, sociological and theoretical traditions that position these concepts as both crucial and complex. I argue for the relevance of the concepts social justice and equity as transformative ideals aimed at bringing about change, and challenging inequality and injustice. Social justice and equity have a long historical and philosophical tradition that can be traced back to biblical times, and has placed expectations on how to conduct relationships with people.

What literature reveals is that the concepts are widely contested, and definitive meaning is elusive. From Plato and Aristotle through to Rawls (1971) and social justice theorists like Young (1990), Fraser (1995) and Gewirtz (1998), it has been necessary to determine both what social justice is, and how it should be implemented. Early traditions found in the writing of Rawls (1971) for example, have focused on distributive justice as a means to support those most marginalised in society. Young (1990), Fraser (1995) and Gewirtz (1998) have extended Rawls' understanding to include relational justice as a more encompassing analytical framework, used to understand social justice and equity as it occurs within contexts. This multidimensional framework includes both the distributive and relational components that facilitate an understanding of micro and macro inter-relations and power implications thereof. This is explored in greater depth in Chapter Two of this study.

In Chapter Two I also discuss the debates that surround the relational and distributional association of social justice and equity. The chapter reviews literature that provides an understanding of the various approaches in social justice that aim for change in pedagogy that is based on equality, fairness and justice. Internationally, there are many programmes and empirical studies that address the way in which teachers make use of the various approaches, namely that of multicultural education, critical pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy and social justice pedagogy. What these various studies portray is the difficulty of being able to comprehensively accomplish the objectives present in each approach. Instead, teachers are

only able to achieve some of these objectives mostly because there is steadfast dedication to the importance of challenging injustice and oppression. Finally, I explore the South African educational terrain and reveal the perplexing nature of the democratic ideals of social justice and equity, which in turn make it difficult to provide learners with meaningful access to quality education. Classroom studies show teachers' attempts to realise these imperatives, but persistent systemic and structural barriers continue to thwart such efforts. South African education continues to be developed along two disparate paths – one for the middle-class, and the other for the vast majority. The embedded nature of historical inequality continues to be felt 21 years after the implementation of democracy.

Chapter Three provides insight into the broad theories that frame this study. The chapter presents the rationale for the theoretical bricolage that was used. Bricolage, according to Kincheloe (2001, p. 680) and Denzin and Lincoln (2008, p. 5), is a French word describing the work of a bricoleur or researcher who makes use of whatever tool is necessary to understand the data collected. Kincheloe (2001) in particular argues against concerns that bricolage is controversial, indicating that “given the social, cultural, epistemological, and paradigmatic upheavals and alternations of the past few decades, rigorous researchers may no longer enjoy the luxury of choosing whether to embrace the bricolage” (p. 681). I chose this theoretical bricolage because I wanted to interpret the data in a variety of ways, where I hoped it would lead me to a novel understanding of the complexities of social justice and equity. I wanted to understand the reason why such oppression persists, despite the concerted efforts to eradicate it.

The only way in which this proved possible was to position the teachers who were my participants at the centre of my research. Boltanski (2011) proved enlightening, advocating for researchers to understand the voices of the participants, and in this case the teachers, who he indicates have the critical capacity, ability and knowledge of how to make sense of their daily realities of social justice and equity. This critical capacity, ability and knowledge are foregrounded in the analysis chapters without in-depth reference to the theory. Despite the adversity of their contexts, teachers made pragmatic decisions that allowed them to navigate these interactions. It is an uncertain world that required them to constantly (re)negotiate and (re)position themselves in multiple ways. They challenged and reinforced the status quo and it was here that it was possible to recognise the critical thought processes that were involved in teachers' decisions and practices. It was a complex, contradictory and intricate web of

relationships. Teachers understood, for example, that learners experienced disadvantage because they were poor, neglected and abused, but that these were as a result of systemic oppression. They believed quite strongly that they could still educate the learners and provide them with the means to be successful, and they expressed their anger and frustration at the injustice that they as well as their learners encountered.

However, sometimes they also reinforced inequality and injustice that disempowered learners. It was in these moments that I became aware that issues, problems and events occur that prevent teachers from being able to exercise agency and control. It was for this reason that I found the theory of Bourdieu (1990) particularly useful for he gave me the means to understand macro and structural constraints. This theory provides an overarching insight into the work that teachers do and the structural impediments that prevented teachers from being able to practice social justice and equity in the micro level of personal and classroom interaction. Bourdieu was not used to analyse the data in a substantive manner. I used his theory instead to illuminate how these constraints prevented teachers from being agential and made negotiations of their realities difficult. Teachers used their historical, social and political habitus to make decisions about their practice in the present. For example, the lack of cultural capital that they experienced growing up motivated them to provide opportunities for learners to acquire the cultural capital needed for schooling. But poverty, unemployment, hunger, social problems and crime which are all structural constraints prevented them from fully realising this, and thus Bourdieu's structure/agency debate provided an illuminating form of analysis.

The study also focused on teachers' pedagogical decisions and practices that made a difference in the intellectual lives of learners. Bernstein's (1996, 2000, 2003a, 2003b) classification and framing approach were used to deductively analyse the pedagogical classroom context. These concepts helped to understand how teachers attempted to drive the process of enhancement, inclusion and participation so as to provide access to quality education. I used Bernstein's concept of framing to understand the manner in which teachers negotiate their pedagogical practices. As a result, I was able to understand the way in which teachers paced, sequenced and evaluated the content in their lessons. This then allowed me to understand whether learners' intellectual skills were enhanced, and whether the skills and knowledge that they learned allowed them to participate in the classroom. Bernstein presents an intricate understanding of knowledge as a form of access to either vertical or horizontal

knowledge has implications for future life chances for learners. Knowledge and the way in which it is classified are bound up with issues of power, and determine who has access to power, and who does not. His conceptual framework is evident in chapter seven through the use of a multitude of empirical studies that have employed his concepts and helped to analyse my data.

It was for this reason that I presented in Chapter Three a more detailed understanding of how knowledge is problematised. In particular, I forwarded the argument by Social Realists like Young (2003a, 2003b, 2008), Moore (2014) and Young and Muller (2014), who contend that powerful knowledge in the form of specialised vertical knowledge is cognitively empowering. It provides learners with the means to acquire new knowledge, as well as the critical skills to critique social reality, and it is for this reason, Young and fellow Social Realists have argued for the promotion of powerful knowledge.

On the other hand, social justice and equity theorists question this claim. They argue that powerful knowledge can sometimes become dominant knowledge that prevents the formation of alternative knowledge, relevant to the lives of marginalised learners. In particular, the funds of a knowledge or culturally-relevant knowledge approach espoused by theorists and researchers like Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez (1992), Ladson-Billings (1995a, 1995b, 1995c), Rios-Aguilar, Kiyama, Gravitt and Moll (2011), Fataar (2012), Zipin, Sellar and Hattam (2012), Edwards (2014) and Zipin, Fataar and Brennan (2015) provide an alternative means to understand the way in which knowledge is constructed and made relevant to learners' lives. For these authors, it is this that makes the curriculum more accessible to learners, as it allows for the incorporation of the learners' world, constructing their background knowledge as both valuable and important. From a social justice point of view, this argument challenges current deficit understandings of marginalised learners' world views. Instead, learners are seen as assets and valuable resources leading to intellectual engagement of academic content. Delpit (1988) differs slightly arguing for the explicit teaching of powerful knowledge, for in teaching this knowledge, learners have access to the dominant world, and are taught the skills that provide them with the necessary cultural power to negotiate the rules of the game within the field of school.

Chapter Four provides a rationale for the use of a multi-method qualitative paradigm through the use of narrative and grounded theory approaches. The theoretical underpinning of this

study is influenced by Boltanski (2011), who views teachers as critical agential beings, provided the rationale for me to use the analytical or methodological bricolage of narrative, grounded theory and conceptual knowledge gained from literature to fully appreciate the teaching lives of the participants, along with their struggles to live up to the ideals of social justice and equity. Narrative inquiry as a methodology provided the tools to understand teachers deeply on an individual level. I observed the way they experienced their daily interactions with their contexts, the learners, the curriculum and their daily negotiations of policies, parents and practices.

The recruitment of participants proved challenging, and the study describes what these challenges were and how I navigated them. Once my sample was eventually decided upon, I then began my research at the schools and I used observation, semi-structured narrative interviews and field observation to produce extensive data to explore the complexity that surrounds teachers' practices of social justice and equity. After data collection, the slow process of analysis began with me using grounded theory strategies in order to stay close to the data and allow the voices of the participants to emerge. Thus the data transformation stage followed an emergent path, where I was able to access data in multiple ways and at various entry points. The grounded theory strategies of open, axial and selective coding was time-consuming, and laborious that often left me confused and frustrated. However, using these strategies also allowed me to make the necessary connections to come up with initial categories that eventually produced my final themes, namely: **The Authoring of the Self**, **The Allegory of Responsibility and Care** and **Re-imagining Teachers' Pedagogical Practices**, respectively.

The analytical framework is underpinned by the influence of context, which played a major role in the way in which teachers understood themselves, their practices of responsibility and care, and their pedagogical practices. Once I had developed this analytical framework, I then needed to find a way to explain the data. I was able to do this through the use of various concepts that I found from empirical literature that I used to reflect back on my data. These concepts from the empirical literature came from various disciplines, for example economics, health and philosophy. I devised a conceptual framework that linked general and specific concepts to teachers' practices and understandings of their identity revealing the nuances, ambiguities and perplexities. I was thus able to understand my data in different and alternative ways. Thereafter, I used Bernstein's (2000) framework to deductively analyse the

teachers' classroom practices. This was done to understand how knowledge was classified and framed. I therefore used deductive analysis to understand the 'what' and the 'how' of teachers' pedagogical practices. The ethical considerations of researching participants and their work were also considered.

Chapter Five is the first of three data analysis chapters. The chapter considers the identities of these teachers and what motivates them to work towards supporting learners in marginalised contexts. The analysis of the data in chapter five revealed that the teachers' historical biographies were influential for their present practices. Teachers' own experiences of oppression and inequality are what motivated them to make a difference to the lives of their learners. They did not want learners to experience marginalisation and disempowerment based on their racial and socio-economic identities. Their Christian identity was particularly influential and teachers used this identity as a moral resource to guide their responsiveness to learners. This Christian identity demonstrates the durable nature of Christianity which positioned teachers in particular ways. The embeddedness of Christianity was reinforced by the institutional habitus that corresponded with teachers' personal identity and dispositions. Teachers invested themselves personally and professionally in living up to their Christian identity. The study situates the contradictions, tension and multiple meanings that surround identity negotiation and re-negotiation as teachers struggled to author themselves in meaningful ways. Their attempts to live up to internal identities were sometimes fraught by ethical and political dilemmas that they found difficult to negotiate. Christianity proved to be structurally determining, but also allowed them to position themselves in powerful ways. At other times, it caused confusion, and a sense of loss of control. In this, compromises were reached, but left them feeling bereft, and uncertain as to how to position themselves, revealing the fragmented and fragile nature of identity construction and negotiation.

Teachers struggled with their 'ought self' when trying to negotiate contexts of high demand. In such contexts, teachers found it difficult to reach ideals of social justice and equity and they vacillated between hope and action. When faced with the demands of so many different levels and needs, teachers struggled. They found it difficult to negotiate their internal identity of beliefs, values and norms with their external identity of action. Teachers' identities resembled more of a divided self, fighting to find their unified identities. They found that in being responsive to the needs of the learners, that they were obliged to take up different positions, which included being the supportive, all-rounder teacher, as well as a teacher

responsible for the moral socialisation of learners. This was because learners lived in contexts of extreme disadvantage, where being ethically responsive often meant that teachers had to (re)negotiate themselves, often discarding deeply-held beliefs and practices.

In Chapter Six, I delved more deeply into the teachers' sense of responsibility and care, and the uncertainty that surrounds their practice. Here, the ethics of responsibility is explored as both constraining and responsive. The focus of this chapter in particular is on how teachers negotiated the academic world of the learners. But in negotiating this academic world, teachers come up against barriers that prevent them from 'accessing' the lived reality of learners. Locked in a world of compounded disadvantage, the value and purpose of education was brought starkly to the fore. It reveals the illusion of democracy, where the vast majority of our people continue to live in abject contexts and survival is the first priority. Here, parents, learners and the broader community cannot find employment to fulfil basic needs, and thus, extended time spent in education is not seen as valuable. This is compounded by the failure of university graduates in the area to find employment, which reinforces their perception that education cannot alleviate their circumstances and help them to traverse the quagmire of poverty. But it is in such an environment that teachers have to continue to convince learners of the importance of education. The imagined future that teachers had envisaged with learners having unfettered access to knowledge is instead absent. Teaching becomes a blessing and a curse, for they are bound mostly by their Christian obligation of responsibility and care to strive for the academic success of learners. This results in teachers feeling a sense of disquiet and uncertainty.

The emotions of the teachers are explored as teachers struggle to regain a sense-of-self and their moral obligations that re-stories the ethics of responsibility and care. The obligation to be responsible and care for academic needs is not a natural and normal process, and teachers find it difficult to reconcile their personal and professional identities with expectations from their religion, from policy and from public discourses. Rather than being normal, easy and natural, caring and responsibility is hard fought, contradictory and difficult to realise. Some teachers begin questioning their self-worth and experience demoralisation and burnout. This complexifies responsibility and care, positioning it as multi-layered, contradictory and incongruent. It becomes even more acutely felt in the face of harsh criticism from the public and external accountability for the results of learners.

In such a climate, relationships begin to break down, where teachers also expect learners to take responsibility for their own learning. Their relationship with the learners starts to change, becoming distant, with teachers looking to external conditions to blame for their lack of success. Some teachers look inward, continuing to hold themselves responsible for the learners' lack of academic success. In doing so, the political dimension of inequality is ignored, and teachers work in continued hope. This is arduous for teachers because they become responsible for outcomes that have systemic undergirdings and that logically they have no possible hope of changing. But they continue to hope that their efforts will result in some success. The findings here raise important questions regarding responsibility in marginalised communities (Fenwick, 2009).

The final analysis chapter includes glimpses of teachers' pedagogical practices. It shows the difficulty of negotiating various contradictory pedagogical positions that are influenced by context, history, social, personal and political factors. The English teachers in particular were influenced by their historical experiences of the language that guided the way in which they constructed the subject. Based on these experiences, they constructed the English language as powerful. The mathematics teachers also constructed their subject as powerful, based on the perception that it is timeless, objective and rational. Despite the various efforts by the teachers to improve the standard of mathematics and English, learners were not very successful. Whilst parents, learners and the wider community understood both mathematics and English as difficult subjects, they did not question the validity and value of mathematics.

English, on the other hand, was regarded as a subject only useful within the confines of the classroom. English was seen as the language of the powerful and not valued by learners, parents and the wider community. This created dissonance between the school and the community. Whilst some teachers made use of the funds of knowledge or culturally valued knowledge of learners and it was seen as important, this knowledge was used mostly as a means to induct learners into more powerful, official curriculum knowledge. For the teachers, social justice and equity was ensured through exposure to official curriculum knowledge, and they did not provide learners with the opportunities to be able to critically engage with environmental and social issues that affected their community. In this way, learners were not able to learn how to challenge and transform their own lived realities. This was because the teachers believed that they had no control over what occurred in the community, but within the confines of the classroom, they could make a difference to the lives of their learners.

Teachers had to weigh up the opportunity costs and for them, the value of official curriculum knowledge was a better decision. Thus, socially just pedagogy was used in particular ways to ensure that learners gained access to the required legitimated knowledge. However, this to some extent may be the reason why learners did not place value on a subject like English, where all they experienced was failure. Thus, socially just practice did not go further than that, and learners were not provided with opportunities to engage critically with issues that were related to their environment. These findings call for a more nuanced understanding of both powerful knowledge and culturally valued knowledge as a means of redistribution and access for learners.

But some teachers' own shortcomings, along with their lack of pedagogical skills, were also mitigating factors that prevented learners from acquiring the necessary skills to negotiate the schooling context in adequate ways. Even whilst some teachers made use of culturally relevant knowledge, failing to link this to particular skills and knowledge locked learners into knower codes, whereby they failed to recognise and realise academic knowledge, rendering the lesson empty of value. In such cases, some teachers relaxed the framing and classification boundaries, leaving learners in control of the content, sequencing and pacing of knowledge that was devoid of academic knowledge. Some teachers also lacked the specialised knowledge of their subject area. This lack prevented learners from acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge. Learners were thereby denied access to cultural capital that would have made negotiating school easier. Lessons were also characterised by low cognitive demand that failed to challenge learners intellectually. This was mostly because teachers felt that most of the learners were not operating at grade level, and whilst teachers taught at the learners' level they were in effect lowering educational standards. External demands and syllabus demands also restricted and constrained teachers' practice, which they had to negotiate carefully. They were insistent that despite this, learning was of paramount importance and they developed strategies to try to complete the syllabus before school or during the lesson periods of absent teachers. This was often a tricky balancing act.

Whilst some teachers did display poor pedagogical skills that prevented access, others were more successful, and their classrooms were characterised by high cognitive demand and expectations. These teachers challenged the culture of poverty that was reflective of teaching in poor marginalised contexts. For the most part, lessons were strongly classified and framed. They produced novel ways in which to ensure learning occurred for all, despite the fact that

they had such large numbers of learners. One of the main ways of providing pedagogical justice was through board-work that also individualised learning. Through the use of board work, learners were challenged to think critically, to justify their ideas, to claim authority and agency over their own learning and to be responsible and accountable to their peers. This provided the impetus for guided and differentiated support from the teacher and peers. There was connected knowing, with learners exposed to previous knowledge, as well as knowledge from other learning areas, so as to acquire skills to tackle problem-solving from a multitude of entry points. Teachers resisted dominant norms and expectations that prevailed and which positioned their learners and themselves in negative and deficit ways. They displayed their ability to survive and negotiate inequitable contexts in ways that produced both meaningful and legitimate knowledge. This showed that teachers were respectful of their own intellectual capacity, as well as that of their learners. Learners were confident and had high self-esteem for they experienced success.

In Chapter Eight, the concluding chapter, I weave together the theoretical, methodological and empirical threads in relation to the research questions that underpinned the study to explore how teachers practised social justice and equity in marginalised contexts. I summarised the crucial findings that emerged from my study that detailed the complexity, contradiction and tensions that were involved in teachers' daily interactions and negotiations of their teaching and learning lives. I was also able to contribute to new knowledge, as explained comprehensively in the final chapter. I conclude the Chapter by providing possibilities for future research in teacher education.

1.7. Finding my narrative

There were personal reasons I wanted to conduct this research informed particularly by my own experiences and influences of education and schooling. When I was growing up, my parents always promoted the importance of education, insisting that my sister and I produce good academic results in order to be able to attend university. This was because they believed that the only way in which we could be successful in apartheid South Africa was through being educated. Being from a working class, Indian family, going to university was not easy and my father had to work seven days a week to fund our university education. They believed in the adage that hard work equals success, and these values became important to me also. My exposure at university made me question the validity of hard work and success, and this was reinforced when I started teaching.

I first engaged with social justice when I enrolled for a Master's degree in Social Justice Education, and my passion and desire to make a difference was once again reignited. I learned about oppression, the effects of oppression, and the role that teachers must and should play in the transformation of society. When reflecting on my teaching career, I laugh at my naiveté in thinking that all that was required was for me to teach, and that motivated and successful learners would follow. However, interactions with learners, other teachers, policy and context soon proved me wrong. Within the confines of the classroom and schools, my interaction with learners allowed me to experience untold joy, frustration and amazement. My Christian identity compelled me to centralise human relationships built on trust, care and compassion. The building of human relationships became crucial to my philosophy of education. As time progressed, and schools became more diversified, contextual influences impacted on what was possible for me to accomplish in the classroom. My initial teaching experience and teacher-training did not prepare me for the everyday realities of teaching.

At the conceptualisation stage of this research, I was a teacher with 18 years of experience, teaching marginalised students in various inner-city schools. While in the classroom, I began to reconsider my understanding of social justice and equity recognising the almost impossible nature of these ideals. My own understanding seemed contradictory, because on the one hand, I believed quite strongly that education has the capacity to make a difference – to provide learners with enhancing and liberating experiences. Influenced particularly by Freire (1970), I worked on the premise that denying learners the opportunity to participate in the process of education that has such resounding effects on their future was unjust. On the other hand, the difficulty in carrying out this task soon became apparent when confronted with large numbers, differing abilities of learners, and institutional and systemic inequality. The limits of what I could do filled me with a sense of unease. But at the same time I also felt that failing to try to make a difference was also unjust and troubled me on a personal level.

The results from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal's Treasury Project⁶ in which my supervisors were involved, revealed startling results about the state of education in the Province. This came at a time when there was intensive research into the poor results of learners in South Africa. Recent analyses by policy analysts, educationists and scholars have

⁶ KZN Treasury Project: commissioned by the Provincial Treasury to investigate the quality of education in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

highlighted that education in South Africa is in ‘crisis’ (for example, Fleisch, 2008; Bloch, 2009; Christie, 2010; Brombacher, 2011; Smith 2011; Tikly, 2011a; Spaul, 2013a, 2013b; Graven 2014). Results from the Annual National Tests, the matriculation results, and various newspaper articles revealed the education crisis to the public. In these public reports, Black, African teachers in particular were heavily criticised for failing to provide quality access and successful outcomes. Repudiation of these reports was few and far between. I questioned this image that essentialised certain teachers. I thought about my own practice, in contexts that were both similar and dissimilar, and the difficulty that I personally had in engaging with learners, resulting in frustration for both the learners and myself. If I was struggling in schools that were relatively well-resourced, had qualified teachers, and were functioning, what was happening in Black schools? Surely there were schools that have predominantly Black, African learners with teachers still committed to quality education?⁷ This became the impetus for how I began to conceptualise this study. I wanted my research to contribute to the personal, social and political reframing and re-storying of what Black, African teachers working in marginalised contexts are able to achieve. Thus, the research that I undertook made attempts to understand the lives of teachers who were trying to make a difference.

The following chapter provides detailed understanding of social justice and equity in education.

⁷ Schools in South Africa are still socially constructed around the four categories of race of White, Indian, Coloured and African that were used during apartheid and still tend to define schools presently.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter locates social justice and equity within a review of literature. It begins by locating social justice and equity within a historical trajectory. It briefly examines the philosophical roots of social justice and equity in order to chart its conceptualisation and development over time, after which it discusses the theoretical underpinnings that reveal the complexity that surrounds these concepts. This is followed by a review of international literature that depicts the difficulty of implementing social justice and equity within the confines of the schooling and classroom context. Literature that was reviewed is mostly found in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia, and focuses specifically on teachers' teaching and learning or classroom practices. Lastly, literature pertaining to South Africa is examined, revealing the disparate realisations of these concepts. Here, literature reveals the need for a re-visioning of theory that is distinctly South African, given the historical, social, economic, cultural and political differences between the North and the South in its implementation. There is limited research in South Africa that has social justice and equity in teachers' classroom practice as its explicit focus. Thus the current research fills a gap in the literature. My research shows teachers' practices of social justice and equity as pragmatic, difficult, complex, nuanced, contradictory and responsive to localised needs.

2.2 The Emergence of Social Justice

2.2.1 Social justice: A contested concept.

Jackson (2005) and Hytten and Bettez (2011) indicate that the question of social justice and how to accomplish it, has been a consistent, but elusive goal. Part of this elusiveness is that there are differing understandings, assumptions and uncertainty as to what social justice actually means. For Hytten and Bettez (2011) this is largely because no single characteristic or definition is possible, as the concept itself is historically and politically constituted, thus making definitive understanding impossible. Gewirtz (1998), Novak (2000), Sandretto (2003), Hytten and Bettez (2011) elaborate on this contestation, indicating that the term social justice appears quite prolifically in research policies and theory, and it seems to "float in the air, as if everyone will recognise an instance of it when it appears" (Novak, 2000, p. 11); but despite this, it remains contested (North, 2008). The uncritical use of the concept has resulted in Cherner, Howard and Delport (2015) and Wilson-Strydom (2015) questioning its value. Thrupp (2006) further indicates that this lack of clarity often means that social justice

becomes a politically pliable and malleable term, which is subject to different political agendas. He also contends that apart from the complexity surrounding its definition, working towards social justice is equally complex and varied, with no clear understanding of what this work entails. The following section presents the philosophical and conceptual understandings of social justice. I situate equity as a social justice component, as it is foundational to this study. Whilst there is an abundance of literature tracing the philosophical, theoretical and historical roots of social justice, I have restricted my literature to those pertinent to education.

2.2.2 Philosophical and conceptual understandings of social justice and equity

I present a broad understanding of social justice and equity in order to lay the foundational work as to how these concepts initially emerged, and the influence that it has on modern society. Social justice in the literature is understood as an evolving concept, dependent for its meaning on specificities of time and place. Historically, social justice and equity can be traced back to ancient Rome, where the philosophers Plato and Aristotle devoted time to the question of what constituted a just society (Tyler & Smith, 1995). Unterhalter (2009) traces the roots of equity to the Bible, situating equity as a matter of justice. Positioning equity and justice as inextricably linked, presents these concepts as virtues that must be upheld according to the will of God. Social justice and equity then become relational concepts, where the actions of people towards one another were judged as being both fair and just.

According to Aristotle (2003) cited in Večeřa (2012, p.5), “Injustice arises when equals are treated unequally, and also when unequals are treated equally”. For Aristotle, social justice was based on equal-ness between equals, and so people could be treated differently, depending on how ‘equal’ they were in society. Aristotle’s concerns pertained to the distribution of what individuals deserved, as opposed to what they actually needed (Jackson, 2005). This led to the understanding that treating people the same was not necessarily equitable. Whilst Aristotle situates justice on an individual or personal level, for Plato and Socrates, community was extremely important, and they showed the clear distinction between what was just for people and what was just for society. These philosophers believed that all people have talents that are uniquely their own, but that these talents must be used for the benefit of the community. So people were acknowledged as being different, because they possessed different talents, however, individual talents and expertise were not valued equally. This was solely dependent on the talent that was valued by a specific community. For these philosophers, the needs of the individual were insignificant in relation to the needs of the

community. Following from this, the unequal treatment of individuals could be justified if it was contrary to the needs of society as a whole (Ruitenberg & Vokey, 2010).

In the middle of the 18th century, in Britain and Europe, theorists focused on understanding how to deal with poverty. With the rise of the economy, disparity between the rich and the poor became noticeable. For Jackson (2005), significant social contract theorists and philosophers at the time were Kant, Smith and Rousseau. These philosophers and theorists claimed that the poor and rich were equal, but added that denying those who are poor access to resources and opportunities to advance in life was harmful. Whilst acknowledging aspects of common humanity, these philosophers and theorists emphasised that taking care of those who did not have access to economic goods was important for society, and was recognition of the humanity of people. Thus, the concept of distributive justice emerged as an ethical, moral and economic discourse. What is significant in these accounts is that being socially just was largely considered to be about distributive justice. In attempting to build an ‘egalitarian republic’, free of poverty and inequality, where the “market (is regarded) as its servant, not its master” (Jackson, 2005, p. 371), social justice and equality were seen to be achievable.

Hyttén and Bettez (2011) have identified three broad philosophical paradigms, namely liberal individualism, market individualism and social democracy (p. 11). The first philosophical tradition is heavily influenced by the political philosopher John Rawls, who situates justice as the distribution of social goods (North, 2006). It is this philosophical paradigm that receives focus here. For researchers like Fleischacker (2004) and Jackson (2005) Rawls was the theorist who gave “social justice its first rigorous philosophical statement” (Jackson, 2005, p. 368). Rawls (1971) is also regarded as the best proponent of the idea of justice as equity and justice as fairness, and his philosophy underpins many studies around equity (Grant, 1989; Secada, 1989). He situated social justice and equity as ethical and political claims. Rawls’ understanding that equity is a crucial social justice component is accentuated here. He emphasises the individual and the promotion of an equal social democracy through the principle of redress or redistribution (North, 2006), differing markedly from Aristotle on this issue. For him, any social institution should have “justice as the first virtue” (Rawls, 1971, pp. 12-17) to ensure a just society.

Rawls’ theory of justice proposes two principles of justice vital to the understanding of justice as equity. This theory is developed around the idea of a social contract that must be

used to ensure that justice and equity are achieved for those least favoured, and brings together a “sharp definition of distributive justice” (Fleischacker, 2004, p. 115). In the first principle, the *equal liberties principle*, all individuals have “an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all” (Rawls, 1971, p. 302). These rights, as espoused by Rawls, are often associated with citizenship, where people share the same basic rights, but where these rights should not impact negatively or infringe on the rights of others (Rawls, 1971; Hytten & Bettez, 2011). This principle centres on the conditions that are necessary for individuals to pursue what is seen as good.

The second principle of justice, *the difference principle*, is associated with the equal distribution of social and economic goods, but where this redistribution ought to be for the benefit of those “least advantaged” (Rawls, 1971, p. 302). Here, there is recognition for those in society who are the least advantaged. What is also of paramount importance is that certain inequalities are justified, for in using the principle of redress, economic and social goods should be redistributed to those who are least favoured (Rawls, 1971). He indicates, “the principles hold that in order to treat all persons equally, to provide genuine equality of opportunity, society must give more attention to those with fewer native assets and to those born into the less favourable positions” (Rawls, 1971, p. 86). Thus equity considerations start with those who are least privileged in society (i.e. who lack the ‘primary goods’), as the first recipients of social and economic goods.

Hence, the philosophical conceptualisation of social justice has a long history that can be traced back to Aristotle, Plato, and social contract theorists like Kant, Rousseau and Locke. However, I did not proffer any detail in this regard, except to indicate that they provided an understanding of social justice and equity as a moral imperative for the promotion of democratic ideals in society. I do, however, position John Rawls’ arguments as critical to the argument of social justice, with distributive justice as a point of departure. His argument allows for an understanding of the uneven distribution of ‘social goods’, but that if we want to create a just and equitable society, then these social goods must be redistributed to those least favoured.

The philosophical and conceptual underpinnings of social justice provide an understanding of justice as a combination of distribution, recognition, opportunities and outcomes (Hytten &

Bettez, 2011). Using these understandings as foundational to the work of social justice can help to analyse and define oppression, particularly as “it operates at various individual, cultural and institutional levels”, and to understand what prevents marginalised people from acquiring full participation in society (Bell, 2007, p. 2). Several social justice theorists in particular Young (1990), Fraser (1998), Gewirtz (1998) and Gewirtz and Cribb (2002), argue against the intense focus of Rawl’s theory on distributive justice, indicating that this is a limited conception of social justice. In the next section, I look at the work of Young (1990), Fraser (1995, 1998, 2001), Gewirtz (1998, 2006) and Gewirtz and Cribb’s (2002) work on social justice.

2.2.3 Contemporary conceptualisations of social justice

Bell (2007, p. 1) defines social justice as both a “process and a goal”. Gewirtz (1998), Fraser (1998) Gewirtz and Cribb (2002) indicate that definitions and practices of social justice produce varied and multi-perspectival understanding. Further to this, Gewirtz (1998) argues that social justice can mean different things, which may often be in contradiction and tension with one another. Gewirtz (1998) also notes that the end goal proposed by Bell (2007) can never be totally, fully and purely realised, but rather, that variations of this are achieved in practice (Gewirtz, 2006).

I have already indicated the manner in which social justice came to be considered as a form of distributive justice (North, 2006; Thrupp, 2006; Hytten & Bettez, 2011). Fraser (1995), Gewirtz (1998), Gewirtz and Cribb (2002) and Hytten and Bettez (2011), question this exclusive focus on distribution that has become synonymous with social justice over the past 150 years. For them, justice as distribution belies the complexity that surrounds social justice as a process, and a goal, that cannot be achieved only through the distribution of ‘goods.’ Young’s (1990) theory of justice is most commonly used in social justice work, and one that critiques social justice as distribution (Hytten & Bettez, 2011). Young (1990) argues that the sole focus on the way in which goods or resources are allocated, fails to account for systemic and structural inequalities and inequities, which mask the inequitable power relations involved in the distribution of these goods (Gewirtz, 1998; Gewirtz & Cribb, 2002; Wilson-Strydom, 2015).

Clark (2006) however, has responded to this claim, arguing that, for example Gewirtz (1998), has misconstrued Rawls’ theory of justice, failing to properly engage with the way in which

Rawls understands distributive justice. For Clark (2006), Gewirtz (1998) and other theorists of like mind misunderstand ‘goods’, seeing this in sociological terms, rather than in philosophical terms. Rawls’ philosophical grounding of ‘goods’ is used “to denote an intrinsically valuable end state to which what we do is directed, which may consist of some or all of the following: happiness, freedom from harm, virtues and so on” (Clark, 2006, p. 274). This, for Clark (2006), takes into account both the relational and the distributive that Gewirtz (1998, 2006) indicates to be absent from Rawls’ theory.

Young (1990, p. 18) in particular, is not convinced of this response, indicating that Rawls’ understanding of non-material goods is based on “static end-state patterns” rather than “complex social processes based on, often conflicting rules and relationships making up social life” (Wilson-Strydom, 2015, p. 147). Such an understanding, Young (1990) argues, “ignores the social structure and institutional context that often help determine distributive patterns” affecting “actions, decisions about actions, and provision of the means to develop and exercise capacities” (p. 15-16). This understanding is echoed by North (2006), who further indicates that distributive forms of justice often individualises the rights of happiness, respect and freedom, seeing them as personal possessions, rather than as relational. Seeing justice in this manner conceals the role that social structures and institutions play in maintaining and reproducing unequal power relations (North, 2006), thus preventing the attainment of these rights. Young (1990) calls for a multi-perspectival approach to social justice that focuses on social justice as it reveals itself in its context of enactment, rather than looking to ideal understandings, as espoused by theory. She indicates that two social conditions – namely oppression and domination – help illuminate injustice, and her theory of ‘five faces of oppression’ aims to understand the “systemic, hegemonic and structural nature of oppression” (Hyttén & Bettez, 2011, p. 11).

Fraser (1995, 1998), Gewirtz (1998) and Gewirtz and Cribb (2002) argue for an understanding of social justice as both distributive and relational. Gewirtz and Cribb (2002) have added a further concept namely associational justice. Relational justice refers to the fairness and justice within relationships and the manner in which these relationships are structured. It is this aspect of relational justice that allows for the interpretation of the way in which power is used, and the justifications one makes regarding conduct. It focuses on both macro and micro interactions and concerns the “nature and ordering of social relations ... [and] refers to the practices and procedures which govern the organisation of political

systems, economic and social institutions, families and one-to-one social relationships” (Gewirtz, 1998, p. 471). This relational understanding requires not only the recognition of the human-ness of others, but also otherness and differences.

Fraser (2007) proposes a three-dimensional representation of justice that incorporates representation (political), distribution (economic) and recognition (cultural). For Fraser (2007), the political dimension of representation encompasses the others, but using this framework, questions of ‘who’ ‘what’ and ‘how’, can also be answered. Fraser (1995) indicates that justice as recognition is cultural or symbolic and is “rooted in social patterns of representation, interpretation and communication” (p.71). Essentially for Fraser (1995), recognition concerns the valuing and acknowledgement of the equal-ness between people. Recognition is also contextual and as researchers, we need a contextually sensitive understanding of recognition that includes people’s struggles for a final authentic self. However, a final authentic self is not possible because in the struggle for recognition people constantly transform who they are. The opposite end of this is misrecognition, which for the theorist “encompass[es] cultural domination, non-recognition and disrespect” (Fraser, 1995, p. 71). To misrecognise someone is to deny him/her access to participate fully in society, and is the result of “institutionalised patterns of cultural value that constitute one as comparatively unworthy of respect or esteem” (Fraser, 1998, p. 3). Those whose values and perspectives are contrary to those of the dominant group run the risk of misrecognition in the form of marginalisation, exclusion and silencing (North, 2006).

Associational justice is related to the nature of the relationship which prevents full participation (Gewirtz & Cribb, 2002). It is concerned with a sense of agency that people have over their lives, and their decision-making ability. This is closely related to what Fraser (1995) refers to as justice as representation. Here representation refers to who is included or excluded in society, and who is allowed voice and participation. Used together, Fraser (1998, 2001, 2007) and Gewirtz’s (1998) theories become more encompassing, allowing one to understand both groups and individuals, and the manner in which belonging to particular groups or being particular individuals enables one to exercise agency (Wilson-Strydom, 2015). Fraser (1998, 2007) and Gewirtz and Cribb (2003) indicate that these three aspects of distribution, recognition (relational) and representation (associational) are intertwined, and that any fruitful account of social justice must encompass these.

For the purposes of this study, I have used these concepts to provide an understanding of the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of society, justice and equity in the provision of access and participation for learners. The theoretical underpinning of social justice and equity provides a means to understanding Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) structure and agency debate. Using the theory holistically allowed for an understanding of teachers' practices and struggles to achieve social justice and equity, where structural impediments exist that prevent the full realisation of these goals. Empirical studies reviewed show that equity and social justice are multi-perspective concepts, where in practice; individuals are constantly negotiating and navigating their spaces. In this way, teachers are constantly critically evaluating and challenging norms and taken-for-granted assumptions that also reveal their struggle for agency (Boltanski, 2011), and are thus not completely determined and impeded by structural and systemic constraints.

2.2.4 Situating equity as a social justice concept

Dyson (2009) and Unterhalter (2009) recognise that equity is a complex social phenomenon that in many ways remains unclear, vague and contested. This is similar to the way in which social justice is understood. Like social justice, equity is also used expansively. The Oxford Dictionary defines equity as the 'quality of being equal and fair', where, historically, equity has been associated with fairness and justice. Equity is often conflated with equality, but Hutmacher, Cochrane and Bottani (2001) and Espinoza (2007) indicate the distinction. If they were synonymous, then equity could be achieved through the provision of equal opportunities. This could mean that in providing people with the same resources and opportunities people are then able to live meaningful and successful lives. Situating equity and equality as synonymous, however, ignores issues of diversity, and the fact that different people require different opportunities, experiences and resources. Equity is related more to aspects of diversity, and accounting for difference. For Unterhalter (2009), equity is reached when equality is turned into action.

Secada (1989) adds that understanding equity involves a process of judging what is fair and just. This process, he argues, is complex, given that equity is a concept that needs to be understood relationally. This understanding is made even more complex because what is equitable differs across time, where specific contexts also (re)shape the way in which we view it (Jordan, 2010). This is mostly because we understand the world differently and use different cultural lenses to make sense of the world (Jordan, 2010). Given the different

cultural views of the world, different interests, as well as feelings of being treated unequally often result in a conflict of values, beliefs and norms. Equity involves examining actions within the existing social, structural and contextual inequality and brings into question the possibility of individual agency.

Structural and institutional inequalities prevent access and a fair sharing of resources that severely limit a person's ability to assume control and agency over their lives (Herrera, 2007). Thus equity concerns are also in tension and sometimes in contradiction, and are subject to (re)interpretation and (re)negotiation. What is important is that decisions about what is fair and just are always underpinned by the question of what is a common good. Thus, Gewirtz (2004) cited in Herrera, Jones and Rantala (2006, p. 18) indicates that researching equity requires an understanding of equity as complex and multi-dimensional, and that it "is not possible to resolve the question of what counts as equity in education at a purely abstract level and that what counts as equity can only be properly understood within its contexts of interpretation and enactment". Therefore, working towards equity and social justice demands localised understandings of how people negotiate practices of equity on a daily basis.

This section presented an understanding of the way in which social justice and equity have been conceptualised theoretically, in order to emphasise their holistic nature. These concepts continue to be viewed as complex and varied in the manner in which social justice is enacted and interpreted. Social justice and equity require understanding on an individual, institutional and societal level, in order to determine how injustice and inequity are maintained and reproduced. In the next section, I discuss the concepts social justice and equity as they unfold in the educational practices of teachers.

2.3 International Research into Social Justice and Equity

2.3.1 Introduction

This section discusses the literature that focuses on teachers' practices of social justice and equity. Literature reviewed from international contexts focused on the complexity and contextuality of teachers' practices. It reveals the tensions, confusions and dilemmas involved in working towards social justice and equity. This adds to the characterisation of the concepts as contextual, fluid and complex. Research in this area focuses mostly on issues of race, gender and class and other inequalities and inequities pertinent to social groups (Spalding,

Kleckla, Lin, Odell and Wang, 2010). These researchers, however, point to social class and poverty as crucial to the understanding of inequity, which has received little critical scrutiny.

The focus of the literature chosen for review relates specifically at teachers' schooling and classroom practices in marginalised contexts. Grant (2012) raises important questions that relate to the purpose of education, and more specifically, the purpose of schooling for poor learners. Haberman (1991), Kozol (2005) and Lalas (2007) describe the gross inequities that are indicative of poor, urban schooling in America. Not only are these schools disparate ethnically and socio-economically, they are also characterised by a 'pedagogy of poverty' (Haberman, 1991), where Haberman (1991) argues that rote-learning and drilling methods abound; teacher directed teaching and student passivity is the norm; lessons are pre-packaged; and where learners only encounter the learning of basic skills. Kozol (2005) likens schools in many American cities to those of apartheid, indicating that such schools only serve to reinforce the deep divisions reflective of American society. These schools continue to be populated predominantly by African-American and Latino students, where distribution of resources, both material and human remains both unequal and unfair. Whilst Lalas (2007) acknowledges reform measures evident in American schools, these reforms have not been able to address the widening gap in academic achievement between white middle-class learners and minority learners in America.

Given such vast inequalities, scholars recognise the part that education and schooling can play in the realisation of a just and equitable society (Carlson, 2007). Power (2008) indicates that in the 1970s, Basil Bernstein argued that education cannot compensate for society. However, she rejects the notion that striving for it is futile. Teachers do have roles and responsibilities within the schooling and classroom context having to navigate curriculum, policies and teaching practices in the provision of a socially just and equitable education. Earlier conceptualisations of social justice positions people as being responsible for the well-being and safety of one another. Without some form of intervention, then, "attempts to offer disadvantaged children a more fruitful educational experience will be doomed to fail" (Power, 2008, p. 35).

Drawing from literature on empirical studies, Dover (2013) has identified five conceptual and pedagogical philosophies that are most evident in the literature on social justice and equity namely: democratic education, critical pedagogy, multicultural education, culturally

responsive education and social justice education. All these approaches are committed to the promotion of education and social equity, but their research focuses differ in relation to the curriculum, to pedagogy and to socio-political issues (Dover, 2013). I do not discuss all these approaches in the sections below, but have chosen to explicate those important to my study in varying degrees. Empirical literature suggests that the separation between the various traditions is indistinct, but I have separated them for purposes of clarity and emphasise unique features evident in each approach. There is prolific research using these traditions that come from the United States, Britain and Australia which encompasses dominant understandings of social justice and equity (Nieuwenhuis, 2010).

2.3.2 The Importance of Learners' Lives: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Various studies acknowledge teaching and learning as a socio-cultural phenomenon. Social justice and equity education recognises the importance of using students' own culture to navigate the dominant 'culture of power' (Delpit, 1988; Ayers, 2006; Carlson, 2007; Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Gay, 2013). Dover (2013) indicates that culturally relevant pedagogy incorporates socio-political consciousness crucial to critical pedagogy, with that of multiculturalism's emphasis on culturally diverse content. Foregrounded in this framework, first conceptualised by Ladson-Billings (1995a, 1995b, 1995c) is teacher identity, and the recognition that teachers' own social, cultural and political identities and beliefs influence the educational outcomes for learners (Dover, 2013). Thus, teachers have to be aware of the ways in which their identities contribute to social and educational inclusion and exclusion for learners. As a result, teachers' commitment to transformation is crucial, and must underpin their classroom pedagogical practice.

The relationships that teachers build with learners within culturally relevant pedagogy is also vital, where teachers begin to learn about learners' lives both inside and outside of the schooling context. This also positions learner identity as vital to the teaching and learning process. Working from the premise that integrating learners' background knowledge, prior home and community knowledge and cultural norms and values into the curriculum and learning experiences, Ladson-Billings (1995a) argues that students will be able to achieve academic success. For her, learners' identities are fashioned through their cultural values, norms and practices - respecting, valuing and affirming these identities help to validate them. Thus, using community and familial values and norms helps to affirm learner identity, which is crucial to academic success. She defines culturally relevant teaching as an act of

empowerment for all, and not only for individuals in isolation. In such an environment, students are able to build and make connections between their own cultural and personal identities, with their school as well as broader society.

Fundamental to this pedagogy for Ladson-Billings (1995b) are three important goals, namely to produce: students who can achieve high levels of academic success; students who can develop a critical consciousness that allow them to critique and challenge “cultural norms, values, mores and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities” (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 162); and students who can demonstrate competence of their own culture and so affirm and value their own sense of cultural identity (Ladson-Billings, 1995b, p. 474). Other terms, such as ‘culturally responsive teaching’, ‘culturally responsive pedagogy’, and ‘funds of knowledge’ (Rios-Aguilar, Kiyama, Gravitt, Moll, 2011), respectively describe a pedagogy that affirms difference and produces counter-narratives to previous deficit research (Gay, 2013). The term ‘funds of knowledge’ was initially conceptualised by anthropologists Vélez-Ibanez and Greenberg in the early 1990s (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011) to examine the social networks and exchange relationships within working class families in America. Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez (1992) then used this concept to understand the educational experiences of working class Latino learners. Funds of knowledge according to Moll et al. (1992, p. 133) refers to “historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills”. Within education, they have focused on using family and community knowledge as pedagogical resources in the teaching and learning process.

Some researchers have also included Bourdieu’s notion of cultural capital, along with funds of knowledge to understand more clearly the issues of power in the experiences of minority learners (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011). Like social justice pedagogy, teachers are required to focus on learner strengths, using them as mediating tools for learner participation and success. There is also extensive research in Australia on productive pedagogies (Lingard, 2005, 2010), which focuses on deepening the quality of pedagogy in order to promote social justice in education. Those who work in developing this pedagogy focus on improving education and have identified twenty pedagogies that are then incorporated into four broad dimensions, namely: intellectual quality, supportive classroom environments, engagement with difference, and connectedness to the world beyond the classroom (Christie, 2008). This model supports rigorous teaching and is intellectually demanding of both students and teachers integral to the teaching and learning process. Lessons taught must promote

disciplinary and subjective knowledge acquisition, classroom environments that are supportive of learners' intellectual journeys and engagement with knowledge that is respectful of learners' backgrounds, and makes the necessary connection to broader society.

Culturally relevant pedagogy is an attempt to challenge the validity, legitimation and hegemony of dominant knowledge (Gutiérrez, 2002) in classroom practice. For those working within this approach, dominant or classical knowledge does provide learners with the cultural capital necessary to negotiate the curriculum; however, dominant knowledge does not address or recognise learners' multiple and diverse cultural identities. This fails to address issues of social justice and equity, as dominant understandings of knowledge are validated, which in a South African context particularly, excludes the vast majority of people. However, challenging dominant knowledge needs to be carefully weighed and considered. Delpit (1988) for example, calls for learners to be given access to the culture of power, as this provides learners with the necessary cultural capital to be able to fully participate in schools and society. Mathematics researchers Boaler (1999), Boaler, William and Zevenbergen (2000) and Gutiérrez (2002) acknowledge that acquiring classical mathematics is important for learners, especially for access to university, but these researchers question whether dominant modes of knowledge that privilege classical mathematics is ultimately purposeful to everyday life. Gutiérrez (2002) argues that asking learners to give up their identities in order to be fully-fledged participating members of society is not a fair trade-off. Instead, there should be a pedagogy that does not call for identities to be sacrificed.

A small-scale study by Young (2010) however shows the tension that arises in attempting to put theory into practice. Her study highlights the inadequacy of teacher development programmes to prepare teachers to use culturally relevant pedagogy in vital and transformative ways. Her study revealed the complexity of practising culturally relevant pedagogy as a means to challenge and circumvent deep-seated structural inequalities and institutional practices of racism. Pointing specifically to the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)* of the United States Congress, which aimed to provide additional support for minority students, teachers in the study expressed frustration, confusion and tension at being unable to empower students when the Act itself reinforced inequality. Young (2010) indicates that this Act has resulted in teachers 'teaching to the test', focusing mostly on the teaching of basic mathematical and literacy skills that preclude teachers engaging in cognitively challenging tasks to help minority learners succeed. If anything, Young (2010, p. 257)

concludes that this has denied learners access to their intellectual rights. Moreover, teachers' own prejudices were contrary to the intention of culturally relevant pedagogy, where decisions about what knowledge to engage with were made by the teachers, effectively devaluing the pedagogy (Young, 2010). This, for her, impacts directly on the shortcomings of current teacher preparation and developmental programmes and is further constrained by time limitations that hamper teachers' ability to address and challenge injustice.

Whilst not disagreeing with the assessment by Young (2010), Dee, Jacob, Hoxby and Ladd (2010) have pointed to the significant increase in achievement in mathematics of learners in the lower grades from disadvantaged backgrounds particularly from Hispanic learners as a result of the *No Child Let Behind Act of 2001*. The Act also enabled a significant change in teachers' instructional practices with teachers making effective use of time and aligning the curriculum more closely with state demands. Moreover teachers began to understand learners performance and change instructional practice to suit academic needs. The accountability demands implicit in the *No Child Left Behind Act* also demanded more highly qualified teachers with many having masters degrees with an improvement in teaching practices noted (Fusarelli, 2004; Dee et al., 2010).

But despite these achievements Young (2010) adds that teachers' continue to lack an in-depth understanding of the link between race and student achievement. Teachers cited valuing and building on student culture with little explicit attempt to link these to improvement of academic learning. This, Young (2010) and Sleeter (2012) argue, is because culturally relevant pedagogy has become trivialised, and is now seen more as 'cultural celebration' "reducing the pedagogy to steps to follow rather than using it as a paradigm for teaching and learning" (Sleeter, 2012, p. 569). Such pedagogy does not promote the teaching of "challenging academic knowledge and skills through the cultural processes and knowledge students bring to school with them" (Sleeter, 2012, p. 259). The lack of engagement into what culturally relevant pedagogy means, often results in add-on strategies or a checklist mentality, rather than a re-thinking of dominant approaches to teaching (Sleeter, 2012). More damaging to students is the essentialising of their culture, in seeing and treating it as fixed and homogenous. Such practices belie the complexity that surrounds culture.

This complexity is also evident in Carlson's (2007) study of a teacher's practice of social justice, where instead of revelling in the homogeneity or diversity of learners' cultures, the

teacher instead promoted assimilation and acculturation within the dominant schooling culture. Carlson's (2007) unease with teachers staking a claim as teachers for social justice centres on the practice of one teacher in his study. This teacher failed to critically examine her own positionality in relation to oppression, and instead reproduced inequality for her learners. Sara, the teacher in the study, positioned herself as the person in control of knowledge, effectively silencing learners and preventing them from constructing a positive English identity. Whilst she attempted to provide learners access to the culture of power through teaching them poetry, her own prejudices about the ability of poor, low-achieving learners prevented her from doing this effectively, since her lesson was aimed at low-level access. She presented them with traditional texts despite believing that her students will not understand the poem. This had the effect of reinforcing her already stereotypical beliefs about what learners of colour can achieve. She often ignored input and invalidated learners' responses to the poem that challenged her ways of thinking and reproduced "dominant structures" that kept her students "in place" (Carlson, 2007, p.18). Learners' own cultural identity was rendered unimportant and irrelevant to the teaching and learning process.

These findings are contrary to the study conducted by Gutiérrez (2000, 2002), where mathematics teachers successfully implemented culturally relevant pedagogy in their classrooms, resulting in positive learner outcomes. In her study of Black and Latino students, Gutiérrez was able to show how teachers took an active interest in the lives of their learners, seeing them in their multiple and varied ways, and using these understandings to shape and mould their pedagogy. Learners were firstly positioned as important to teachers, but teachers also had a deep knowledge of learners and their lives, and were able to incorporate this successfully into their pedagogy. In such an environment, students were able to thrive. Teachers based their understanding and practice on valuing culture, ensuring there was high academic instruction and expectation and cultural competence. The findings of Lipka, Hogan, Webster, Yanez, Adams and Clark (2005) echo that of Gutiérrez (2002). Citing the importance of positive student relationships and using pedagogy that Native Eskimo learners had valued and found relevant, the teacher was able to involve learners in mathematics communication and elicit positive results. The teacher created a 'third space' (Gutiérrez, 2002), wherein learner realities were valued and affirmed, and where they were able to negotiate and construct a positive mathematical identity. Learners' own cultural knowledge was incorporated and valued alongside traditional mathematics knowledge in the curriculum.

Whilst these efforts are noteworthy, Sleeter (2012) still contends that culturally responsive pedagogy will continue to be undervalued, due to teachers' inability to fully comprehend what cultural pedagogy in fact entails. Leonard, Brooks, Barnes-Johnson and Berry (2010) cite examples within research that expose this weakness. Teachers do not have an understanding of what is culturally relevant, and thus, cannot make the essential links to rigorous engagement in mathematical knowledge and content, leading to learner disempowerment. They also focus on learning about culture, as opposed to teaching challenging mathematical knowledge and skills that use learners' cultural knowledge as a resource. These researchers also show how, in merely using culturally relevant pedagogy as a bridge between home and culture, or as a mediating tool of learners' prior knowledge to that of official curriculum knowledge, is also inadequate. To be effective, culturally relevant pedagogy must incorporate issues relating to wider social inequity. Sleeter (2011) also cites neoliberal reform that refutes the importance of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy, and continues to distance learners from the education process through continued failure. She shows that education reform, whilst attempting to close the achievement gap, offers standardised curriculum that, for her, fails to take into account the contexts of different learners. These concerns are shared by Strutchens et al. (2012), who indicate that research into education reform has revealed that African-American and Latino students are consistently exposed to teachers who do not deliver high quality mathematical instruction, and who do not make appropriate use of resources within and outside of the schooling context.

This devaluing of learners' culturally important knowledge is also evidenced by teachers using the productive pedagogies approach, which emanated from Australia. This study shows the difficulty that surrounds attempting to insert alternative pedagogies into teachers' practices. Ahmad, Jamil and Razak (2012) video-recorded the teaching and learning of nine geography teachers across nine high schools in Malaysia, who used the productive pedagogies approach. Findings revealed that the teachers had very little understanding of the four dimensions of productive pedagogy. Instead, teachers taught in very traditional ways, and interaction between the teachers and learners was limited, and often characterised by very little extended critical thinking. For the learners, geography was a disconnected school subject, and had little impact on their own understanding of culture and society in wider contexts beyond their own.

Teachers were positioned as controllers and authorities of knowledge, rendering learners as passive and undervalued. Learners were not exposed to higher-order thinking, and low cognitive demand was a norm in the classrooms observed. All that learners were required to do by the teacher was to reproduce what knowledge was given by the teacher resembling Freire's 'banking knowledge.' Learners' knowledge and contributions went unacknowledged, and were undervalued. Instead, there was explicit valuing and recognition of dominant knowledge and culture, evident in the curriculum presented to learners. What their study showed is the need for professional development in order to be able to meet the needs of learners and promote quality education within schooling in Malaysia.

The important tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy are described above, where it is made clear that the cultural and community knowledge are important pedagogical resources that enable epistemic access for marginalised learners. This approach affirms learners' identities, because of the value attached to what is important to learners. Culturally relevant pedagogy positions rigorous teaching as a crucial component and teachers must have high academic expectations of their students if students are to become successful. In the next section, I look at multicultural education as another approach that aims to affirm, and which responds to diversity.

2.3.3 Responding to diversity: Multicultural education

Multicultural education positions cultural diversity as foundational to its goals to provide educational opportunities to groups who are marginalised in society to "help students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to become effective citizens who promote social justice within their local communities, their nation-states and the global community" (Banks, 2015, p. 60). Multicultural Education has been particularly influential in the United States, where there is need to proactively respond to the diversity, given the large numbers of immigrants. Banks (2015) indicates that multicultural education has five important dimensions, namely: multicultural content important for the curriculum, the knowledge construction process which situates learner engagement in constructing meaning, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy that promotes the academic achievement of all social groups – but particularly marginalised groups – through teaching strategies and styles, and lastly, the restructuring of school culture to facilitate equity and empowerment (Dover, 2013, p. 5). Together, these five components integrate the knowledge and insights of marginalised groups.

Multicultural research, according to Bennet (2001), has specific focus areas. Firstly, research focuses on issues of societal equity that depict the success and failures of policy implementation and programmes to access, participation and achievement of marginalised groups. Keating and Klatt (2013) and Kenway (2013) have provided insight into the effects of the Gonski report in Australia around the issue of educational funding. These researchers have highlighted the way in which decreased funding impacts negatively on the achievement of learners. Decreased spending in poorer schools continues to have an effect on achievement that is contrary to equity goals and ideals. This is echoed by McGregor, Mill, te Riele and Hayes (2015), whose research has indicated that schools already disadvantaged and poorly-resourced, face an uphill battle to improve success. Pointing specifically to neoliberal policies, testing and individual accountability agendas, these researchers show the seemingly impossible nature of teachers' work in bringing about educational equity for marginalised communities. They explain how this focus on individual accountability has led to the further marginalisation of learners, because teachers and administrators blame learners for their inability to 'fit into the system' (McGregor et al, 2015). Often for principals, the option is not to provide learners with access to quality education and support, but rather to get learners out of the schooling system as quickly as possible. This calls into question the purpose and meaning of schooling and education for the vast majority of learners in Australia.

Secondly, research also focuses on multicultural competency and prejudice reduction. This must start with teachers themselves, reflecting on their own prejudices and beliefs. Teachers' belief systems have an influence on their pedagogical practices, which impacts learner participation, access and success. King (1991), Sharma (2005), Castro (2010), Silverman (2010), Agirdag, Merry and Van Houtte (2014) and Cochran-Smith, Villegas, Abrams, Chavez-Morena, Mills and Stern (2015), have respectively conducted research on pre-service teachers' multicultural competence and their beliefs about different ethnic cultures. Sleeter (2004) and Castro (2010) found that one of the persistent issues facing pre-service teachers was that they held deficit views and had lower expectations of minority learners. Further to this, Sleeter (2004) contends that white teachers who make up the majority in the teaching fraternity in the United States used their own dominant cultural identity, as a mythical norm against which to measure all learners, often resulting in the questioning of the capability of minority learners. Sharma (2005) has argued that teachers have simplistic and romanticised understandings of multicultural education, where they often adhere to homogeneous constructions of learners and resort to treating all learners the same way. Her study into

teacher preparation for teaching culturally diverse students highlights the critical role that teacher education ought to play in promoting multicultural education. Teachers in the study emphasised the need for professional training to teach in culturally diverse classroom, given their lack of knowledge in this area (Bigler, 2002; Silverman, 2010).

The failure of some pre-service education students to acknowledge race often leads to what Bigler (2002) calls colour blindness, but also has implications for teachers' multicultural competence (Bennet, 2001). This lack of knowledge is translated into classroom practices, and often teachers' own deficit understandings of learners in relation to language, intelligence, gender differences or relying on stereotypes of race, class and culture, which effectively disempower and marginalise large numbers of learners. Their own meritocratic mantra of hard work and success is used to measure all students without cognisance of the structural barriers that prevent student achievement, and instead, this reinforces stereotypical and deficit understandings of minority learners (Bigler, 2002; Sleeter, 2004). This was also echoed by Castro's (2010) review of literature, which traced the development of pre-service teachers' understanding of cultural diversity, multicultural education and social justice education from 1985 to 2007. Castro (2010) contends that teachers continue to hold individual learners responsible for their inability to be successful without recognising the "system of failure embedded in institutional practices that disfavours and disenfranchises minority groups" (Castro, 2010, p. 207). For Castro, teachers must challenge and confront their own stereotypical beliefs if any transformation in society is to occur.

Multicultural research, according to Montecino (2004) and Cook (2013), has often focused on white teachers' practices, and for Cook (2013), the intersectionality of race, class, gender and sexuality are not fully explored. This, they argue, is a limitation of multicultural education. Montecino (2004) argues that the focus only on white teacher-training and development prevents Black teachers from developing the necessary pedagogy required to teach in multicultural schools which may also focus on cultivating a belief in the intellectual capability of learners of colour (Cook, 2013). African-American teachers of colour may lack knowledge of how to use different learning styles for effective teaching and learning. Given the different ethnic groups in schools, there are also a variety of learning styles that teachers of colour may not have found training in, and may not be able to use these effectively in the teaching and learning process. She calls for a rethinking of multicultural education that "marginalise and under-prepare African-American pre-service teachers" (Cook, 2013, p. 46).

Whilst teachers may be willing to incorporate learners' community knowledge, they may have little knowledge of specific instructional strategies to do this effectively. However, within education programmes, the focus tends to be on preparing white teachers to teach for diversity, with little regard for ethnically diverse pre-service teachers. Cook (2013) argues further that not only are Black pre-service teachers underprepared to teach learners of colour, but they also feel under-prepared to engage with their teaching colleagues around issues of race and equity in education.

White (1996) proffers a critique of the current practices of multicultural education that have not challenged existing, dominant power structures, especially in relation to curriculum knowledge. She shows how simply including minority culture into existing curriculum content and arranging curriculum so as to be sensitive to different cultures, can be regarded as merely a form of 'benevolent multiculturalism'. Such an approach fails to change the existing unequal relationship that is prevalent in education systems, and justifies the existing status quo. To be effective, multiculturalism must depend on the promotion of diverse knowledges, and for students to be able to understand the nature of knowledge as 'power-laden' rather than 'power-neutral' (Banks, 2015).

Banks (2015) acknowledges this shortcoming, and argues that as a reform movement multicultural education must be open to critiques and a new direction in thinking. Celebrating diversity and the experiences of individuals does not involve a systematic understanding of how power is maintained and used within institutions to promote forms of oppression like racism and classism. Its explicit focus on classroom practice and pedagogy, values and beliefs also does not account for the way in which teachers and learners can become agents of change, challenging institutional inequity. Banks (2015) recognises, for example, that despite the existence of multicultural education and the integration of multicultural content there has been little to suggest that students of colour have benefitted academically.

Nieto (2004) also recognises this as a shortcoming, and calls instead for the continued influence of critical pedagogy, and for a move towards critical multicultural education. Based on her research into the schooling experiences of ten students from various ethnic and social class groups, she concluded that the voice of students is vital to the education process. She called for critical multicultural education that: a) affirms students culture without trivialising the concept of culture; b) challenges hegemonic knowledge; c) complicates

pedagogy and involves constant questioning of pedagogical decisions; and d) promotes students' self-esteem created in socio-political contexts (Nieto, 2004). In this way, critical multiculturalism can be promoted as being transformative, rather than merely additive.

This shortcoming is made all the more crucial following a recent study in Flanders (Belgium) by Agirdag et al. (2014) into teachers' pedagogical practices in relation to religion. These researchers point to the fact that multiculturalism as a research phenomenon comes mostly from America, where even marginalised communities like Latinos' tend to subscribe to the dominance of Christianity in the country, and that this could explain the silence in the U.S. around religious diversity. What Agirdag et al. (2014) found in Belgium was that teachers mostly incorporated the contribution and additive approach to multicultural education, as espoused by Banks (2015). Operating from this contribution and additive approach resulted in teachers in the study failing to challenge the persistence of ethnic, religious and cultural dominance on both an institutional and individual level. In looking at the textbooks that learners were using, Agirdag et al. (2014) found that the only aspect altered was the names of characters in the text, with no changes to content to be reflective of Muslim culture. These 'cultural tidbits', according to Nieto (2004), are reflective of a static understanding of culture, but as Sharma (2005) notes, teachers use their own beliefs, understandings and knowledge in making decisions in the classroom that results in affirming what is regarded as valuable or not. Agirdag et al. (2014) found that the Muslim learners felt alienated from mainstream cultures. They called for further research into this aspect of religious diversity, including the way in which teachers might respond to diversity in a manner that does not trivialise or work towards the interests of the powerful elite. It is for this reason that Agirdag et al. (2014) have called for a focus in multicultural education not only on the 'other' but also 'otherness' itself.

Thirdly, research in multicultural education also focuses on equity pedagogy. I place emphasis on equity pedagogy, as it is crucial to my study, and because of the focus it places on the instructional and pedagogical needs of students of colour and from low-income groups. It is assumed by proponents of equity pedagogy that if one is able to transform the school environment, especially the inequity that is inherent in the hidden curriculum, teachers' assumptions and expectations of learner achievement (including instructional strategies, as well as institutional practices and policies), that equity would help learners achieve better results. There have been numerous studies into the way in which positive, culturally responsive caring schools and classroom climates (King, 1991; Noddings, 2012),

positive teacher dispositions (Jackson, 2013); student achievement based on culturally appropriate teaching and teachers' strong pedagogical knowledge base (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b; Bajaj, 2009; Gay, 2013; Jackson, 2013; Campbell, Nishio, Smith, Clark, Conant, Rust, DePiper, Frank, Griffin and Choi, 2014) and cultural styles in teaching and learning, can affect learning. A study by Sywelem, Al-Harbi and Fathema (2012) shows, for example, that Saudi students prefer a lecture style of teaching, and Jackson's (2013) study showed how clapping, rhythm and movement evident in African-American culture helped learners to better engage in mathematical learning and helped learners construct and interpret knowledge and reality differently. Bennett (2001) however cautions that using different cultural styles of learning can also lead to cultural and ethnic stereotyping. It is important then to understand that any study into equity pedagogy reveals complexities, contradictions and tensions that must be thoughtfully navigated.

What research into equity reveals is that learners have the potential to achieve, and that education must provide them with the opportunities to do so. Equity pedagogy has as its explicit aim for students to understand how society operates, how power is inherent in social structures, and for them to become agents of change. In meeting this aim, then, teachers are crucial, and must help learners acquire the necessary skills to challenge, question, and change social practices and dominant knowledge through the subjects that they learn (Gutiérrez, 2000; Gutstein, 2007b). They should also provide learners with the necessary opportunities to become co-constructors of knowledge, rather than silent recipients (Nieto, 2004). Banks and Banks (1995) argue that "equity pedagogy within a pluralistic democratic society should help students to gain the content, attitudes, and skills needed to know reflectively, to care deeply and to act thoughtfully" (p. 152). To this end, pedagogy must be dynamic and powerfully learner-centred, but at the same time, must be flexible and thoughtful enough towards individual learner needs.

With this aim in mind, teachers are required to change their teaching techniques and methodology in order for especially marginalised learners to achieve in school (Banks, 2015), changing the disparity in achievement between high and low achievers (Ladson-Billings, 2006). When learners are taught these skills, the result is reflective and agential learners who are not accepting of hegemonic values and norms. Equity pedagogy also focuses strongly on content that is transformative, similar to that of Ladson-Billing's culturally relevant pedagogy, where the interests and cultures of learners must be acknowledged, and should

form part of the curriculum. Banks and Banks (1995, p.156-157) indicate that for equity pedagogy to be successfully implemented, it cannot be only based on a version of ‘feel-good’ pedagogy, but is instead reliant on teachers who have a “sophisticated knowledge base” and who are responsible to “multiple student characteristics”, focusing on the individual needs of learners. Such pedagogy is also demanding of students, and is grounded in high expectations (Jackson, 2013).

McDonald and Zeichner (2009) contend that what multicultural education has done in practice however, and more especially in teacher education, is that teachers have chosen to either focus on understanding the diverse backgrounds of learners, or they focus on gaining good subject knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. This however, fails to illuminate the way in which marginalised learners require not only access to high quality learning opportunities, but also teachers who can integrate subject matter expertise with knowledge of, and commitment to social justice. This in effect prevents marginalised groups from accessing high quality learning opportunities. Recognising this shortcoming, both Banks (2015) and Sleeter (2012) have added that the approach must include and develop intellectual capacity as well as foster a spirit of activism among learners. Using vignettes from three teachers, Sleeter (2013) forwards four aspects to extend multicultural and social justice teaching: rejecting deficit understandings of learners by treating their culture as crucial to learning; developing curricula and content that includes many cultural groups; getting students to engage critically around sensitive issues; and understanding and acting on social justice issues in the world and the classroom. For Sleeter (2013), transformative intellectual knowledge is a key component of multicultural education.

Multicultural education then explores the way in which teachers respond to cultural diversity in classrooms that are heterogeneous. Having to negotiate contexts proves problematic and complex for teachers who often acknowledge difference without recognising the structural force that creates the difference. This pre-empted the move to critical multiculturalism, and teachers and researchers working within the approach, regard power as central to exploring how diversity is valued or devalued. The next section considers critical pedagogy which has, as its explicit focus, the manner in which teachers attempt to challenge and transform society.

2.3.4 Considering inequitable power relations: Critical pedagogy

Critical educators are concerned with the creation of a more just and equal society, not only in relation to acquiring the “good things of life but also perhaps more important of people being in cultural, economic and political control of their lives” (Tripp, 1992, p. 13). This approach is also referred to as progressive pedagogy, whose specific aim in education is social reform. People working within the critical pedagogy paradigm are particularly influenced by the work of Paulo Freire, and using Freirean concepts of critical consciousness, dialogue and praxis, engage with social issues pertinent to the lives of learners and in society. For Freire (1970), oppression can only be overturned through the process of self-reflection and action in the world. In this manner, people who have been oppressed can change their reality and take their place in the world. Through the problem-posing approach, crucial to Freire’s work, teachers and learners are able to co-investigate to firstly realise injustices, then, to be able to critique them, and thereafter, to transform this through action. Thus, the call for teachers to adopt critical pedagogy in their work towards social justice and equity must focus, amongst other aspects, on the creation of a culture of schooling that empowers marginalised and disenfranchised learners (Darder, Boltodano & Torres, 2009).

Within critical pedagogy, education is positioned as a political endeavour and a tool for emancipation. Teachers are required to take a stance against different forms of oppression (Nieto, 2004). As such, critical pedagogic practices must challenge prevailing thoughts of curriculum, pedagogy and education as being politically neutral. Through the process of dialogue, teachers must develop an understanding of the relationship between an individual and society “rife with contradictions and asymmetries of power and privilege” (McLaren, 2009, p. 61). Critical pedagogues need to wrestle with issues of identity and power, acknowledging that learners with marginalised identities would not automatically become free simply through the acquisition of educational skills, but that they require additional support and exposure to both how and why they are marginalised.

But schooling is seen as both a space of domination and liberation by critical theorists. Critical pedagogues working in, for example, critical mathematics education, seek to broaden equity goals through promoting mathematical skills and knowledge, as well as the acquisition of skills that would enable learners to become agents of change and to promote a more just and equitable society (Tripp, 1992; Gutiérrez, 2002; Gutstein, 2003, 2007a, 2007b; Valero, 2003; McLaren, 2009; Leonard, et al., 2010, 2005). These researchers attempt to find a

balance in the process of teaching for social justice. They balance teaching traditional or classical knowledge, accounting for cultural identities and community knowledge that learners bring with them to teach towards the goals of social justice, namely equity.

Gutstein (2003, 2007a, 2007b) calls for research into mathematics teaching for social justice that uses a combination of critical pedagogy and culturally relevant pedagogy, such that learners can be taught the necessary critical consciousness required to engage with socio-political issues relevant to their lives and mathematical competences. Gutstein's (2003, 2007a, 2007b) work is crucial, where it addresses the issue of racism in mathematics education, which remains an issue not usually covered in mathematics as a subject. He argues for a social justice pedagogy that raises the socio-political consciousness of learners, and is inclusive of their social cultural identities. Including these aspects into pedagogy then allows learners to develop a sense of personal and social agency in the process of co-constructing knowledge.

Gutstein (2003) engaged learners in reading the world around issues such as inequitable schooling, housing redevelopment, distribution of wealth in the world and in the United States, gendered, raced and classed SAT and ACT scores, and used mathematics to understand and analyse inequity and injustice. Influenced by Freire, Gutstein (2003) used the problem-posing methodology to engage learners in understanding the political implications of what occurs in their own contexts and as a means for learners to develop a sense of agency in the manner in which they co-construct relevant knowledge. Findings revealed that incorporating real socio-economic, political and educational issues that learners faced was a major motivating factor for learning, but moreover, that learners acquired a critical understanding of differential treatment and experiences that people of colour face daily. Furthermore, using student life, world knowledge, or funds of knowledge (Gutstein, 2007a, 2007b) as entry points, learners acquired "mathematical power" (Gutstein, 2003, p. 66) in the classroom, characterised by high expectations, a high quality curriculum and instruction, and a high level of mathematical thinking and opportunities. Students developed their own problem-solving methods and provided mathematical reasons for their solutions, and were able to use mathematics to understand the world. In this way, learners developed a sense of social agency needed to fight against systemic oppression.

Research by Peterson (2009) shows, that despite the difficulty in using Freirean pedagogy, it can be used to inform both content and methods crucial to the classroom. As a way in which to conscientise learners about their own oppression and the need to challenge oppression, Peterson (2009) incorporated the world into his classroom teaching in order to get learners to reflect on their own personal lives. He describes how by using the writing process approach, dialogue or problem-posing and co-investigation, students were able to build connections between the English content they were learning, their own lives, and wider society. In this process, learners developed a sense of themselves as subjects, questioned the nature of reality and developed an understanding of knowledge as a social construct. Through various instructional strategies and skills, like drama activities and writing, learners developed praxis to change and transform the world, where for example, through critical thought processes around police brutality, they organised a protest march.

Delpit's (2009) study on language diversity showed that different groups of people learn language differently, and that schools have a role to play in excluding and marginalising large numbers of learners in this regard. She instead calls for an inclusive approach to multilingualism, where learners are expected to acquire an understanding that diversity of thought, language and worldviews are common in life. Whilst celebrating diversity, Delpit (2009) however cautions that education "at its best hones and develops the knowledge and skill each student already possess while at the same time adding new knowledge and skills to that base. All students deserve the right both to develop the linguistic skills they bring to the classroom and to add others to their repertoires" (Delpit, 2009, p. 335). Thus, learners need to be provided with the opportunities to add to the language base, but also to understand the political implications inherent in 'standard English' and its ideological underpinnings that English language acquisition will ensure success in the economic world. Findings from engagement with two research participants revealed that learners must be taught about the power that is associated with language and the repercussions in failing to acquire these language skills. Learners in her study, for example, interviewed personnel officers in workplaces to investigate their language preferences in both oral and written language, and were able to see the connection of language acquisition on their future life chances.

Tripp's (1992) research into a Grade 3 teacher's practice shows the difficulty of teachers challenging hegemonic institutionalised ways of teaching mathematics. In the 'right answer syndrome' associated with mathematics as a subject, the teacher in the study followed routine

ways of teaching learners the concept of prediction. She reneged on practical application, choosing to explain the concept to learners. Learners were not able to understand what prediction was in an abstract sense, and could not connect the purpose of learning the concept in school to their daily lives. Whilst learning how to measure and estimate are legitimate curriculum tasks, applicability remained unclear to learners. By failing to allow learners to explore and use their own understanding of prediction or alternatives to routine practices unequal learner-teacher relationships were reinforced. Learners were precluded from making decisions about their own learning, and therefore could not take responsibility for it. The learning they were exposed to was, in effect, disempowering, but Tripp (1992) attributes this to larger systemic issues that prevent the teacher from being critically conscious and self-reflective of her own praxis, such as the size of her classes, and the time constraints she was under.

This section highlights crucial studies that use the concepts and features of critical pedagogy that situates education as a political endeavour, and questions the neutrality of knowledge, whilst attempting to raise the socio-political consciousness of learners. Learners and teachers made attempts to read the world and understand the inequality that is indicative of their contexts, through the process of problem-posing, co-investigation/construction and attempting to transform and change the world. The next section expands on social justice education and its pedagogical implications for teachers and learners.

2.3.5 The Intersectionality of Oppression: Social Justice Education and Pedagogy

Teaching for social justice continues to be an area of concern and enquiry and a great deal of research on this subject has been generated in the United States (Zeichner, 1993; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Grant and Agosto, 2008). Dover (2013) indicates that social justice education was initially an approach that was theorised within universities and organisations to provide a more holistic understanding of systematic oppression, and to respond to equity concerns and has incorporated various aspects from critical multiculturalism, culturally responsive education, and democratic theory. As discussed in the sections above, social justice education underpins many of the studies already discussed, and thus in this section, I reviewed studies that show how various forms of oppression intersect; literature that reveals teachers' attempts at challenging systemic inequity and injustice, as well as the complexity of practice. Adams, Bell and Griffin (1997) indicate that social justice education focuses on the intersectionality of multiple forms of oppression that are related to social identity. An analysis that focuses on

the intersectionality of oppression provides a better understanding of the complexity that surrounds the challenges to equity in society.

Understanding, for example, the interconnections of race, class and ability, can allow researchers to perceive the ways in which these multiple modes of difference bring about distinct consequences for learner identity education and society. It also highlights the efforts by movements, educators, policy and schools to provide opportunities to promote learner ability. At the same time, questions as to why learners of particular racial and socio-economic groups are identified as lacking in ability are raised. Artiles (2011, p. 437), whose interests lie in understanding the racialisation of ability, has shown the consequences of the NCLB policy on learners who have ‘double-bind’ identities of race and disability. Artiles (2011) indicates that in the climate of accountability, learners belonging to target identity groups of race and ability are subjected to remedial programmes, with poor student-teacher relationships, and segregated schools with poor funding, that impact negatively on their ability to succeed. If anything, such exposure reinforces inequitable outcomes.

Working from the premise that classrooms and schooling are reflective of inequities that exist within broader society, social justice education sees classroom teachers as pivotal to challenging the social and educational oppression of subordinated groups. They emphasise explicit curricular content that helps both learners and teachers understand how social groups “exist within constructed and unequal hierarchies in which they experience differential access to power and privilege, resulting in an unjust and oppressive system” (Adams et al., 1997, p. xvii). Moreover, teachers are not only required to critically examine the world with learners, but also to imagine education methods that promote alternative ways for learners to relate to others and the world. Ayers (2009) states that social justice education must involve action - action within the classroom, school and broader context, so as to effect change. Such action includes developing agentic identities, taking on new perspectives, negotiating the realities of schools, and becoming agents for social change (Ritchie, 2013). Literature in the field concerns itself with teaching that unlocks students’ learning potential by challenging the inequalities of school and society (Adams et al., 1997; Ayers et al., 2009).

Ritchie (2013) shows the importance of teachers presenting critical counter-narratives to those that reproduce inequality within schools. His study into the practices of eight teachers who teach towards social justice, showed how teachers using Freirean methodology helped

students understand various social issues that plague their communities, as well as how to transform and change the ways in which they viewed the world and their actions therein. The teachers in the study looked at systemic factors that prevented full participation, rather than individualising and blaming learners for their failure. In teaching learners to become agents of their own lives and learning, these teachers firstly made an attempt to understand the ‘voice’ of learners.

Problematising the manner in which voice is used in research, Ritchie’s (2013) participants used the concept to signify agency and sense-making in the world. Their pedagogical strategies to develop learners’ voice included understanding the world of the learners which were regarded as assets challenging prevailing deficit discourse. This was a difficult endeavour for teachers, and showed the deep structural nature of oppression. This made constantly challenging and disrupting normative hegemonic discourses prevalent in education, and in curriculum complex. But using learners’, parents’ and caregivers’ voices and establishing relationships built on care, as emphasised by care theorists like Noddings, these critical educators were able to work with credibility to tackle issues that are likely to have been controversial to parents and learners alike.

Using media and literature as pedagogical resources and strategies like debates, monologues and drama, teachers were able to insert the voices of those who have been historically marginalised by traditional curricula. They were able to persuade learners to engage with social issues and stereotypes of race, class and gender evident in textbooks and advertisements. This allowed learners to understand, for example the manner in which curricula can silence, as well as to make invisible the voice of privilege, power and oppression in them. This allowed learners to see links between their own and others’ marginalisation and oppression, and to work towards ways of taking agency to challenge inequality. Teachers wanted learners to understand systemic issues of racism, sexism and classism in a critical manner that positioned these issues as complex, with no easy solutions. Teachers in the study were adamant that critical engagement was crucial to activism, rather than merely a social justice ‘checklist activity’. Instead, teachers and learners engaged over the structural forces that underpin oppression. Using learners’ socio-political awareness to deconstruct complex issues, teachers co-constructed agency with them that allowed them to act. For example, one of the teachers asked learners to investigate a Black housing project that was earmarked to be razed, and through investigation, students had meetings with and

wrote letters to government officials that showed ways in which to preserve certain community assets.

Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, Lahann, Shakman and Terrell (2009), Cochran-Smith, Shakman, Jong, Terrell, Barnatt & McQuillan (2009) and Gutiérrez (2010) have responded to one of the most debilitating critiques of social justice and equity projects, namely that teaching for social justice lacks deep pedagogical knowledge and depth, and is focused on “teachers being nice and children feeling good” (Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, Lahann, Shakman and Terrell 2009, p. 627). Opponents of social justice set up a dichotomy between justice and knowledge, with social justice being touted as anti-knowledge, trivial and lacking in rigour. This understanding is reinforced by the current accountability and testing programmes that support traditional knowledge and makes teaching for social justice difficult. But Cochran-Smith et al. (2009) point to this as a false dichotomy, indicating that social justice education promotes teaching traditional knowledge, but challenges its universalising and hegemonising influence. Gutiérrez (2010) also shows how an uncritical understanding of social justice, also evident in some programmes, justifies this critique by rendering and constructing learners as mere “consumers of social justice projects” rather than active and agential (p. 4). These researchers acknowledge power as integral to any knowledge construction that has influence on learners’ achievements in schooling.

Cochran-Smith, Shakman, Jong, Terrell, Barnatt & McQuillan (2009) disprove such critiques, through their study of candidate teachers’ practices of equity and social justice. Their study showed how teacher candidates were able to show a commitment to social justice and equity albeit on an individual level; and further, that teaching for social justice and equity was a complex activity. Such practice needs to be nurtured and developed over a period of time. Teachers in their study positioned learning as pivotal to the goals of social justice education. Despite the fact that much of the knowledge that these teachers conveyed was in the form of traditional and official knowledge, they also provided learners with opportunities to challenge and critique this knowledge that allowed them to perceive knowledge differently. This was because teachers were aware of the ramifications of uncritical understandings of knowledge on learners’ opportunities, and in turn, on society. But despite their interest in teaching for social justice, they seldom offered learners the opportunity to critique systemic and structural inequality evident in schooling such as grading, tracking and labelling. Learners were not given opportunities to explore how their social and racial

positioning disadvantages them in the schooling system and prevents access and opportunity to full participation. Thus, teachers were unable to provide critique of injustice and inequity at a wider policy and political level. Cochran-Smith et al. (2009), however point to the importance of teacher-training in developing teachers' ability to engage with issues of social justice, and to challenge deep structural inequalities.

Glasgow (2001) and Morrell (2005) show how using new media literacies, digital technology, popular culture and young adult literature can successfully engage learners in thinking, writing and speaking about social justice and equity, in ways that challenge dominant texts and thinking, and envision different ways of understanding the world and changing unequal social relations (Morrell, 2005). Using various novels and pairing college students with high school students in a networking relationship, Glasgow (2001) provided learners with opportunities to critique, deconstruct dominant texts, and to question the ways in which systems of race, gender and class are implicated in the various characters' actions and situations in the various novels they selected. A cyber-journal project was set up in the study, where students could correspond with each other via email and the internet in discussions important to their respective novels, around various forms of oppression and injustice. Learners were able to clearly understand the complexities of social justice issues, and were able to critique actions, and critically discuss how; for example, race existed on various levels, but also presented a vision for the future, based on hope and inclusivity. In being able to understand literature in this manner, they were also able to develop a sense of their own agency, while also positioning social responsibility as crucial to ways of being in the world.

For many researchers, mathematics is regarded as a gatekeeping subject, especially with regards to the future of low-income students and students of colour. The inequities that marginalised learners experience have been well documented (Haberman, 1991; Tate, 1995; Gutstein, Lipman, Hernandez & de los Reyes, 1997; Gutstein, 2003). Typically, teaching traditional mathematics evident in the curriculum has not resulted in better performance, especially for minority students. Current mathematics reform focuses on improving teacher instruction, accessibility, quality and relevance, but does not provide both teachers and learners with the means to challenge systemic inequalities that perpetuate the status quo. Whilst there are studies and programmes aimed at improving quality and accessibility (Boaler, William and Zevenbergen, 2000; Boaler, 2002), and incorporating diversity (Banks & Banks, 1995; Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b), there are very few studies that

integrate social justice and mathematics as a means to improve social agency (Leonard et al., 2010).

Critical mathematics researchers Frankenstein (1995), Gutiérrez, Baquendano-López and Tejeda (1999), Gutiérrez (2002) and Gutstein (2003, 2007a), are amongst those researchers who have adopted critical mathematics pedagogy into their own practices and research so as to respond to teaching and learning mathematics for marginalised learners. They call for mathematics that exposes learners to critical consciousness, as well as competency in mathematics. Teaching for mathematical equity positions learners as central to the teaching process, and emphasises making mathematics relevant to learners' lives. The role of the teacher is to make inequity, power and activism explicit in their teaching and in the curriculum. This 'socio-political turn' in mathematics education is critical to the improvement of learning outcomes, access and participation of marginalised learners (Gutiérrez, 2010).

Calling into question the importance of classical mathematical knowledge, these critical mathematics researchers question the validity of a mathematics that fails to proactively account for the identities of a vast majority of learners. Thus, critical mathematics educators working towards social justice position the cultural identities of learners as vital to learning, but also address social and political inequality in society (Gutiérrez, 2002; Gutstein, 2003; Gonzales, 2009). Working from the premise that mathematics must be meaningful to historically marginalised groups of learners, Gonzalez (2009) used a community of practice approach with seven high school mathematics teachers, who used non-traditional mathematics to understand and improve the social life of the poor, Black and Hispanic learner. Similar to Boaler's (1999) longitudinal study into how students make use of school mathematical learning, both these studies showed an improvement in the mathematical achievement of learners. Using statistical data, students in the study by Gonzales (2009) were able to investigate admission rates, graduation rates, advanced placements and incidences of violence. Here, students were still expected to understand and learn traditional or classical mathematics. The content, however, was geared towards taking into account the context of the learners. Students were exposed to teaching strategies that enabled a questioning of the imbalance in outcomes of schools that serve historically marginalised groups but also provided learners from these communities with the necessary information to make decisions about their choices when they leave high school.

The teachers in the study were able to identify components in the non-traditional or social justice curriculum that lacked mathematical rigour, whilst others were aligned with the mathematical standards required by the official curriculum. Teachers acknowledged the injustice prevalent in society as well as within the schooling system, and felt that they had a role to play in challenging systemic disadvantage within their classroom practices. However, teachers also pointed to the school culture that was focused on standardised testing, which impacted their ability to teach mathematics in a socially just, relevant manner that resulted in one of the teachers leaving the high school to teach in a middle school, where she felt she had more freedom to address social justice issues. They also pointed to the understanding that merely exposing learners to injustice was not sufficient, but that awareness must be accompanied by action. Gonzalez's study (2009) also showed that any work towards social justice needs support towards understanding of teaching as a political act.

Dutro, Kazemi, Balf and Lin's (2008) case study illustrates the complexity of identity work and the intersectionality of race and culture. Working with school children on a project based on cultural identity, learners questioned the manner in which their own racial and cultural categories were constructed. Bi-racial learners expressed frustration and anger at being marginalised, because their identities did not fit into normative, fixed racial categories to which their classmates were exposed. Whilst this research pointed to the complexity involved in understanding the way in which race and culture are socially constructed, it also pointed to the importance of learners' own knowledge base, in exploring and understanding issues of race, ethnicity and culture within multicultural context like the United States, where racial categorisations are more complex. Often, as was evident in this classroom, race and cultural identity were conflated, and these identities were regarded as fixed and essentialised constructs, rather than varied and dynamic.

2.3.6 Summary

The sections above have traced the trajectory of social justice and equity as discussed in a variety of literature, where the complexity of the concepts is worth emphasising. Thereafter, the different approaches, ranging from culturally relevant pedagogy, to multicultural education and critical pedagogy, and finally social justice education, received discussion. The criteria relevant to each approach was emphasised, and the complexity of attempting to work towards it was also crucial. In the next section, I move to understanding social justice and equity in the South Africa context.

2.4 Social Justice and Equity in the South African Context

This section provides an outline of the political landscape that positions social justice and equity as policy ideals and imperatives in the South African context. I argue here that the education system has failed to provide quality to the majority of South African learners. I also show how race as a form of oppression is still prevalent, mostly because of the way in which it has systemically determined the geographical location of learners, and that class inequities are beginning to become entrenched. Lastly, the section provides a window into research around teachers' practices of equity and social justice that differs quite remarkably from what is evident in international contexts.

This literature shows that teachers in South Africa have not been involved in professional development that exposes them to ways of working towards the goals of social justice and equity. However, despite this, there are teachers who try to teach in socially just and equitable ways. These are teachers' pragmatic responses that reveal the complexity and difficulty of implementing these ideals, as premised in policy. Teachers also experience extreme emotional and intellectual dilemmas when trying to practise the theoretical tenets of social justice and equity. Social justice and equity are ethical and moral imperatives, and teachers struggle to achieve this, given contextual factors and structural barriers. Thus, social justice and equity have to be constantly re-visioned, re-imagined and revised so that theory and policy account for how people, history, contexts and culture influence the "landscape of justice and equity" (Subreenduth, 2013, p. 581).

2.4.1 Situating social justice and equity in the South African policy context

The South African democratic government in 1994 was faced with the important task of redressing past racial inequities. The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996* founded on fundamental democratic principles of human rights and social justice provided the framework for policies, people, teachers and learners to work towards. Massive transformation to education followed, and parliament passed the *South African Schools Act 84 of 1996* (Department of Education, 1996), to ensure that all learners enjoyed the right of access to quality education, free from discrimination and prejudice. Policy imperatives as stipulated in White Paper 1 envisaged that a just and equitable system would unfold (Department of Education, 1995). It was government's task to create conditions that enabled the promotion and realisation of *quality* education for all. This was difficult, given the vast

legacy of inequities, for example, unequal infrastructure, material resources and human capacity (Christie, 2008).

The government's response to such entrenched inequalities was the process of racial redress and redistribution, based on the principle of equality of opportunity (Christie, 2012; Badat & Sayed, 2014). A rights-based education system, with the principles of equal opportunity, was implemented, and provided those learners previously excluded on racial grounds, with opportunities of access, provision and outcomes. The curriculum within this rights-based education system focused on promoting values of equality, equity, unity and social justice. According to Fiske and Ladd (2004) and Christie (2008), government taking an equality treatment approach to equity actually conflated equity and equality, resulting in redistribution and recognition, but where participation remained elusive. Government, for example, sought to redress and remedy past inequalities through redistribution and recognition, spending approximately 18.5 percent of the annual budget on education (Modisaotsile, 2012). Its effectiveness, however, for Christie (2008) and Badat and Sayed (2014), is questionable, because provision, access and outcomes do not challenge the systemic, historical and structural educational inequalities, which are crucial to effective change. Neither was there sufficient attention and support given to how it was implemented within classroom contexts, and this is now reflected in the lack of quality within the education system itself (Christie, 2008; Taylor, 2008; Badat & Sayed, 2014).

What this has also resulted in, is that social justice and equity then came to be synonymous with redress, thereby limiting its effectiveness and its meaning. What is noticeably absent is that any endeavour towards social justice and equity must be accompanied with quality public education, in order for learners to be able to participate fully in education and society. At present, the South African education system is characterised by "high cost, high participation, low quality" (Taylor, 2008, p. 4). This current state of affairs cannot be regarded as socially just or equitable, which for Christie (2008) and Badat and Sayed (2014) calls into question political will, along with government's commitment to those who have been historically marginalised. Thus, the evolution of South Africa's understanding of social justice does not account for historical, social and economic inequalities that continue to prevent the successful implementation of "equality, equity, redress, good quality education and so social justice for all" (Badat & Sayed, 2014, p.129).

However, policy change and implementation is still “long on values and principles but short on strategy including finding the right people and finances to effect the transformation of the education system” (Badat & Sayed, 2014, p. 130). By and large, then, policy goals are symbolic and they make allusions to transformation and enhanced opportunities for disadvantaged learners, but in reality, have not been pragmatically possible (Jansen, 2002; Christie, 2008; Spreen & Vally, 2010; Sayed & Ahmed, 2011; Hammet & Staeheli, 2013). But the deep divisions created by apartheid legislation continue to resonate today, with the “deep contours of inequality in education that have proven almost impossible to shift in the post-apartheid period” (Christie, 2012, p. 8).

2.4.2 The contradictions of access

The above section provided a brief understanding of how social justice and equity are understood in policy, where implementation has proved difficult. Here I position access as an equity imperative crucial to the realisation of social justice. I also show how a tenuous understanding results in contradictions in implementation and practice. South African government policies and strategies to achieve social justice and equity all focus on redress that have earmarked race as a significant marker for redistribution and provisioning.

Crouch (2005) and Motala and Dieltiens (2010) concede that stemming from these policies, equitable changes have occurred in South African education, for example, in terms of redistribution of resources and access to schooling. Sixty percent of schools in South Africa have been declared ‘no fee’ schools, which has helped the poorer schools (Motala & Dieltiens, 2010). The most visible change has been through the policies on desegregation, funding in schooling, and increased enrolment that are comparable to international standards (Ndimande, 2013; Badat & Sayed, 2014). Schindler and Fleisch’s (2007) quantitative study reveals that South Africa has achieved an access rate of 97 percent. But Taylor (2010) indicates that in this rapid enrolment, “quality has been a casualty of this growth” (Taylor, 2010. p. 2). Motala and Dieltiens (2010) and Taylor (2010) argue quite convincingly that access to substandard education does not translate into meaningful and purposeful education for the vast majority of Black learners. Government implementation of the National Norms and Standards for School Funding meant that budget previously reserved for ex-Model C⁸

⁸ Ex- Model C Schools: formerly white schools during apartheid that now caters for middle-class learners across racial categories.

schools was used for redress and equity purposes in poorer schools, with the hope that monetary redress would translate into quality redress as well (Sayed, 1997); but has resulted in entrenching differential access, widening the chasm between the rich and poor in South Africa.

Using this equality of opportunity agenda to address issues of redistribution has had the opposite effect, resulting in the formation of two tiers in the South African Education system (Fleisch, 2008). Through the ‘soft-zoning’ policy (Sayed & Motala, 2012) of fee-paying schools, competition has become normalised, with the middle-class across racial categories being able to access the first tier that has well-resourced and better quality schools. ‘No fee’-paying schools have locked in the majority of learners in the second tier, which is also compounded by geographical location that restricts access. Those within the second tier find themselves in schools characterised by poor quality, inadequate resources, and schooling that fails to provide them with the necessary educational opportunities (Sayed, 1999; Motala, 2009; Sayed & Motala, 2012).

What is significant in this restructuring of access is that the lines between race and class have become blurred where “race gives way to class” privilege (Christie, 2012, p. 2). Black middle-class learners now attend previously white, middle-class schools, and equity based on opportunity is now premised on social class and geographical location (Christie, 2012). However, patterns of the way in which learners are performing in schools are still racially skewed with poor, Black learners performing poorly, resembling performance during apartheid. When schools were desegregated, white children already had the required cultural capital, having been privileged by apartheid schooling. This compulsory schooling provided them with the necessary academic skills to be successful in school and university. They had access to well-resourced schooling and well-trained teachers, who could provide them with the required curriculum skills and knowledge. They also had access to smaller classes, which also meant individual attention, and this reduced failure rates and improved retention rates.

This, however, was the opposite for the average Black child, whose schooling was severely and systemically hampered, where Black schools were lacking even basic amenities like toilets, running water and electricity in a situation of relentless poverty (Pendelbury & Enslin, 2004). Many learners had to walk long distances to schools because of their geographical location, and once at school, were faced with teachers who were unqualified, or under-

qualified, with poor disciplinary knowledge and poor pedagogical practices (CREATE, 2009). Various other factors include hunger, and high absentee rates on the part of teachers (Taylor, 2008; Modisaotsile, 2012), with very little accountability and responsibility on the part of teachers for the quality of education in particular. Based on data that emerged from SACMEQ III (The Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality),⁹ teachers were found to have poor content knowledge, knowing as little or as much as the learners they taught. Teachers also attributed responsibility for poor results on external factors, without being accountable for their own development and learning and teaching outcomes (Spaull, 2013a).

What Taylor (2008) also highlights is that whilst teacher absenteeism is problematic, learner absenteeism is not a major problem, which essentially means that learners may be present and willing but do not have teachers to teach them. Thus, the educational landscape has remained largely unchanged, with many Black schools which “were entirely dysfunctional under apartheid remain[ing] largely dysfunctional today” (Spaull, 2012a, p. 3). The accompanying low results seem all the more clear when compared to results from former Model C schools. The geographical location of many Black learners and areas in which they live makes it impossible for them to access urban, white middle-class schools where quality schooling is the norm. This ‘historical geography of schooling’ continues today, and any understanding of education in South Africa, must still continue to be understood against this historical inequality and continued disadvantage, which the vast majority of learners face (Christie, 2012; Spaull, 2012a). Government’s various education policies aimed at redress and equity continue to hold little purchase in schools and classrooms across South Africa (Christie, 2012).

2.4.3 Quality of education

South Africa’s strong equity and justice agenda within policy assumes that resource distribution would lead to redistribution of quality achievement, meaningful learning and outcomes. Whilst initial policy focused on equity, diversity and human rights, the issue of quality was also evident within policy. The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (Department of Education, 1996) aimed to provide “an education of progressively high

⁹ SACMEQ III- International Research carried out on the performance of Grade Six learners in Mathematics and Literacy in African countries in particular and in which South Africa participated.

quality for all learners and in so doing lay a foundation for the development of all our people's talents and capabilities" (Department of Education, 1996, p.1). However, after more than twenty years of democracy, various studies have consistently shown that there is a lack of correlation between the huge investment in education and the quality of achievement outcomes across the schooling system (Crouch & Vinjevold, 2006; Soudien, 2007; Christie, 2008; Fleisch, 2008; Taylor, 2008; van der Berg, 2008; Bloch, 2009; CREATE, 2009; Frempong, Reddy and Kanjee, 2011; Sayed & Motala, 2012). These researchers acknowledge that South African education is in crisis, with Spaull (2013a) stating that the country has the "worst education system of all middle-income countries" (p. 3). This begs the question as to whether in developing contexts there is always an "inherent trade-off" between quality, or equity, but never the possibility of both (Ross, 2007, p. 9).

This understanding becomes plausible when analysing evidence from international and national tests like the TIMMS¹⁰ (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study), SACMEQ and Monitoring Learning Achievement¹¹ (Soudien, 2007), where South Africa performs poorly against other less resourced African countries (CREATE, 2009). These disappointing results were highlighted in the Grade Three and Grade Six systemic evaluation research studies, which showed poor levels of performance (Department of Education, 2003; 2005; Spaull, 2012b). At the primary school level, the Annual National Assessment (ANA) results show the poor performance of learners in South Africa in mathematics and literacy. Mean literacy and numeracy scores for Grade Three in the 2011 ANA tests ranged between 28-35 %, with Grade 6 scoring 28% on literacy scores and 30% on numeracy (Spaull, 2012b), which means that a large proportion of our learners are "functionally illiterate and functionally innumerate" (Spaull, 2012c).

Evidence from local and international research offers myriad explanations and insights ranging from quality of teaching and learning, issues of social class and cultural capital, family and community supportiveness, learner social and educational backgrounds, poor teacher content knowledge, and poor pedagogical practices (Taylor & Vinjevold, 1999; Carnoy, Gove & Marshall, 2003; Taylor, 2006; Spaull, 2012a). There are also significant

¹⁰ TIMMS is the International Assessment of the Mathematics and Science Knowledge of Fourth and Eighth Grade learners around the world.

¹¹ Monitoring Learning Achievement was a research project that sought to monitor, assess and thus improve the learning outcomes of learners.

differences in performance and achievement between Quintile One, Two and Three schools, which are generally attended by poorer learners and Quintile Four and Five, attended by learners from richer families (Christie, 2012; Badat & Sayed, 2014). Christie (2012) indicates that whilst race and class may have become slightly blurred, the experiences of the majority of learners from racially homogenous schools continue to provide them with an “almost automatic route to marginalisation” (p. 11), preventing them from developing capabilities that are crucial to leading a fully human life (Pendelbury & Enslin, 2004). However, Badat and Sayed (2014, p. 136) indicate that this structural impediment of quality education evident in the primary school is most visibly evident in the matriculation results, with “80 percent of university entrance passes being generated by only 20% of secondary schools” mostly located in historically white schools. This provides a true reflection of a lack of access to quality education and full active participation that learners experience in South African education.

The cumulative effects of a lack of access to quality education is felt most starkly by the majority of South African learners, who continue to face exclusion and marginalisation, and whose chances of tertiary education or quality of life remain fraught. It ought to be noted that such disproportionate inequalities at school level are also very likely to translate to imbalanced inequalities in the labour market as well (van der Berg, 2008). Crouch (2005) states that there is a crucial need for reform based on equity, but he argues that issues of quality and efficiency that continue to mar the educational terrain work against any impetus towards social justice and equity. So whilst physical access in education has been achieved, access to quality and meaningful education continues to remain a dream, out of the reach of the majority of Black learners. This is in contradiction to the promise of a better quality of education for all that was guaranteed by the Constitution. But Crouch and Vinejvold (2006) indicate that whilst the South African government has put access to education before quality, it is now making attempts to redress the issue of quality through various initiatives. Some of these initiatives include the National Learner Attainment Strategy, which required that all provinces provide intervention measures to improve learner outcomes, and the Dinaledi Project, aimed at improving mathematics and Science taught to African learners. The latter is a long-term project.

In sum, this section above has explored the educational terrain more than twenty years after apartheid and where racial inequity continues to be present, and where class, historical, educational, social and geographical location disparities have become glaringly obvious as

markers of inequity and injustice (Christie, 2012; Badat & Sayed, 2014). These oppressive factors continue to exclude learners, not only from quality schooling, but from the achievement of full humanity and participation in social life (Pendelbury & Enslin, 2004). I now map research that focuses on the classroom practices of teachers that provide insight into the complexity of working towards social justice and equity.

2.4.4 South African studies on equity and social justice in education: A pragmatic response

As evidenced from the preceding section, a great deal of work has been done on issues of equity in South Africa (for example, Taylor & Vinjevold, 1999; Crouch 2005; Taylor, 2006; Christie, 2010; Smith, 2011; Tikly, 2011b). Most studies on equity within South Africa tend to be large scale, and are quantitative. Studies conducted by Taylor (2006), Soudien (2007), Frempong, Reddy and Kanjee (2011), Smith (2011) and Tikly (2011b), use findings from large scale studies like SACMEQ and TIMMS to analyse South African education. Specific equity indicators such as socio-economic background, issues of access, and quality of education are a few indicators used in this endeavour. Whilst South African policy is rich, and infiltrated with ideals of social justice and equity, there is limited research on the way in which South African teachers engage with these imperatives in the classroom. This study is my attempt to add to the research on how teachers negotiate their practices of social justice and equity within their classrooms and schooling contexts.

There is growing research on professional identity (Jita, 2004; Nduna, 2008), which focuses specifically on teacher education in the form of pre-service and in-service teachers' experiences of social justice and equity (Francis, Hemson, Mphambukeli & Quin, 2003; Francis & Hemson, 2007; Francis & Le Roux, 2011; Davis & Steyn, 2012). In this research the focus is on teachers' and lecturers' identity (re)construction and/or their experiences in challenging different forms of oppression based on race, gender and hetero-sexism, as well as the difficulty around how it is conceptualised and implemented. There is also a great deal of research on policy implementation of social justice and equity imperatives (Sayed & Soudien, 2005; Taylor, 2007); desegregation (Harber, 1998; Carter, Caruthers & Foster, 2009) inclusion and exclusion (Soudien, 2004; Soudien, Carrim and Sayed, 2004) disability and inclusion (Ngcobo & Muthukrishna, 2011; Sayed and Motala, 2012; Muthukrishna, 2013); race and gender in schools (Bhana, 2005, 2008) and values education (Drake, 2014; Ferreira & Schulze, 2014).

In this section, I turn to the classrooms of South African teachers and outline research that details their practices. Social justice pedagogy and equity pedagogy focuses specifically on teachers' classroom practices and teachers' attempts to interrupt and challenge inequality and discrimination as these take place in classroom contexts (Banks, 1995; Picower, 2012). In this section, I present an argument that differs quite starkly from the way in which social justice and equity imperatives are implemented internationally. To do this, understanding the educational terrain in South Africa cannot be overstated, where teachers are required to play a key role as agents of transformation and change. In this transformative role, teachers are positioned as critical thinkers, who have clear knowledge of the social, political and educational context they use to transform teaching and learning for those within their care.

Nieuwenhuis (2010) and Subreenduth (2013) I believe have argued quite convincingly, that social justice is an ideal – a vision of an 'imagined social order' – that ought to be felt in the hearts and minds of people. It is, in other words, a lived ideal that must be consciously realised as a responsibility to and for each other. For these researchers, as well as others within social justice education, social justice and equity can only be understood within specific contexts. Not only is education needed that focuses on the hearts of teachers, but also on their minds, such that social justice and equity can be realised for learners. Research in South Africa that provides a contextual and situated understanding of teaching explicit practices of social justice and equity is limited. In this section, I instead highlight literature that focuses on teachers' pragmatic attempts to work towards social justice and equity, which also demonstrates the complexity of working towards these ideals. These are teachers who have not been 'trained' in social justice and equity, but rather, those who feel in their hearts, that they are responsible for and to others and to enhance the freedoms of those less powerful (Nieuwenhuis, 2010). Consequently, I position a re-visioning of the concept as it plays out in specific contexts and relationships of history, society, economy and the personal. This adds to a localised understanding of social justice and equity, unhindered or constrained by theory, but by pragmatic movements by teachers on the ground.

As stated in the section above, the South African government has achieved remarkable successes in their attempts to meet social justice and equity goals. However, Soudien (2007) states that the issue of quality in education continues to be a persistent issue; one which challenges these goals. The bleak reality is that the vast majority of teachers' encounter conditions of extreme deprivation with a long, deeply entrenched history of social, spatial and

material inequality. It is within this environment that teachers are expected to be transformative agents of change. Not only are teachers expected to live up to policy expectations, but dominant, western theoretical principles of social justice and equity situate a particular kind of teacher, and given such inequality, living up to these expectations proves itself to be unrealistic. What the literature from South Africa reviewed here suggests, is that teachers' practices are more a pragmatic realisation of what is possible to do in the classroom than what one ought to or ideally do. It shows the tensions and contradictions of having to traverse difficult conditions, and providing access, participation and outcomes centred on quality are arduous.

In this section, I present studies that highlight issues that teachers are attempting to address and the complexities of working in South African education. As stated previously, there is limited research dealing with social justice and teaching and learning, and thus I present two studies that focus specifically on teachers who use social justice and equity pedagogy to meet learner needs.

Research into education began in earnest once researchers and policy-makers began to understand the poor outcomes of learners. This led to research that looked at teachers' classroom practices as pivotal to understanding learner access, participation and outcomes. Interestingly, researchers working with a Bernsteinian school of thought provide insight into teachers' pedagogical practices in poverty contexts. Hoadley has been particularly influential. Her research into classroom pedagogy has consistently revealed that in poor, disadvantaged contexts, teachers' poor pedagogical practices result in inequitable outcomes for learners. Classrooms in South Africa, she indicates, are characterised by low cognitive demands, repetitive and disengaged instruction, with strong teacher control and lessons devoid of academic purpose (Hoadley, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2012; Hoadley & Ensor, 2009). These findings are also consistent with those by Dieltiens, Letsatsi and Ngwenya (2012) who add that more time in these low-performing schools is spent on discipline, and classrooms are mired in passivity, rote-learning, chorusing and teacher talk, strongly resembling a pedagogy of poverty (Haberman, 1991). Whilst there are some competent teachers who make a difference, the schools in this study were characterised by a lack of motivation on the part of both teachers and learners. These researchers indicate that what learners are faced with is a lack of meaningful access that can be attributed to a multiplicity of factors, including a

refusal by various stakeholders to take responsibility for the lack of access and instead blame each other.

Hoadley and Galant's (2015) research into poor schools in the Western Cape has revealed that there are schools attempting to achieve quality education, despite inequitable conditions. Using a Bernsteinian framework, they contrasted two schools, one a high-performing school and the other a low-performing one, to understand how specialised knowledge is understood and reproduced. Both these schools were situated in communities where there were high unemployment rates, and severe social problems. Findings reveal that there is a link between institutional identity and teachers' instructional practices and roles. The higher-performing school was characterised by clear instructional roles, high expectations of learners, good management support, where staff relations of respect, teamwork, commitment and dedication were evident, and teachers prioritised learner performance and had clear directives and support structures in place to help those learners who are struggling. Teachers worked collaboratively and had regular meetings to plan the curriculum. In this, teachers and managements had a more strategic and in-depth understanding of how to meet the needs of learners. Test results were analysed, and after school remediation programmes put in place to assist learners. There were also regular meetings, as well as consistent and fair monitoring of teachers, learners.

The low-performing school, on the other hand, was characterised by poor performance on the part of learners, and poor work ethic from teachers, which reproduced poor performance for learners. Whilst promoting a strong communal spirit did improve social cohesion and affective bonds, this however worked against the academic orientation of the school, as it impacted on teachers' instructional time, and was not forged around improving instructional and pedagogical goals. There was weak classification of teacher roles and the division of labour was fluid. For these researchers, understanding the institutional base of schools reveals the kinds of knowledge that are produced. These researchers contend that school structure and orientation influence the manner in which the curriculum is clarified and implemented. Having clear structural goals, responsibilities and functions provide teachers and members of management with the necessary knowledge to intervene, and thereby to enhance the expertise and specialisation required for high quality education.

Fataar and du Plooy's (2012) research into the learning experience of four Grade Six learners in Cape Town, provides insight into the way in which teachers in poor schools construct learner identities. Whilst their research focused on learners' experiences, details of learners' experiences within the classroom provide insight into what poor children are exposed to daily, and exposes teachers' pedagogical practices. The social context in which learners lived impacted on the way in which teachers responded to them as learners. Teachers' time was spent on being responsive to the pastoral and social needs of learners, but classroom instructional time was characterised by pedagogical tasks that were largely disengaging and detrimental to learning. Learners were subjected to chalk-and-talk methodologies, teachers with poor subject knowledge, insufficient contact time and homogenising pedagogy. For these researchers, homogenising pedagogy occurs because teachers are not *au faire* with the content of the subjects that they teach, mostly because they are made to teach subjects for which they were not trained. This is then combined with teaching in marginalised contexts that proved overwhelming for them.

In such contexts of learning, teachers construct learners in particular ways, which can be either affirming or disempowering. Thus, teachers' practices were not only influenced by their own low levels of knowledge, and poor teaching contexts, but also by the way in which learners were constructed, and the extent to which they responded positively to individual learner needs. This then impacted on the way in which learners experienced their learning. What this study showed was the importance of teachers being able to understand the living contexts of the learners they teach, and the difficulty surrounding these learners, and being responsive to it.

These findings echo those found by Chetty (2013), whose ethnographic study into the day-to-day experiences of school life of Grade Six learners in KwaZulu-Natal revealed the manner in which teachers reproduced inequality for already marginalised learners. Chetty's (2013) study highlights and emphasises the extent to which context, social group identity and status influence learners' experiences at school, which entrenched inequality and constrained learners' ability to achieve success. The manner in which learners were positioned within the schooling context reveals differential experiences, based on the accepted persona required and affirmed by the teachers. The educational discourse of the school positioned learners with marginalised identities in deficit ways, and whilst some learners were able to challenge and negotiate themselves against hegemonic discourse, many, especially those most vulnerable,

could not. Learners, who were unable to navigate their deprived social conditions and the school environment that consistently subjected them to compromised teaching and learning, soon became disenchanted.

Fataar's (2012) long-standing empirical research conducted both on his own and with his students, has revealed the necessity for re-thinking curriculum. Using the theory of Bourdieu, Bernstein and Fraser, he argues for a recontextualising of official curriculum knowledge that takes into account the cultural knowledge of learners and positions an explicit pedagogies approach. His empirically-based research has continually shown up the discursive gap between learners' subjectivities and knowledge, against that of schooling, which has resulted in what he believes to be pedagogical injustice. In this, the cultural knowledge of learners is not given value or currency, and accounts for their experiences of failure. Acknowledging this social justice impetus as a long-standing process, he indicates that what is needed is the improvement of teachers' knowledge base, as well as pedagogical practice. Using Fraser's concepts of recognition and redistribution, he proposes a relational approach that situates the cultural experiences of learners as pivotal to successful learning. This explicit pedagogy must be intellectually rigorous, relevant to learners, and must be cognisant of learner difference. These three aspects form the framework of what he argues is moving towards pedagogical justice for marginalised learners, which takes into account both cultural and school knowledge, and is crucial to future educational aspirations.

A study conducted by McKinney (2011) in a multi-racial all-girls school in Johannesburg adds another dimension in which to understand the debate around knowledge that Fataar calls upon for re-examination. Using a post-structuralist lens to analyse a Grade 10 'top' class through lesson observations, interviews, surveys and language network, McKinney (2011) attempts to make sense of the dominant, multiple and competing discourses evident in the classroom interaction between learners and their teacher. In this interaction, learners take up agential positions in an attempt to disrupt taken-for-granted assumptions and discourses of the teachers which are raced, gendered and classed. Learners attempt to take up various positions, but the teacher's own assumptions about learners make these attempts difficult.

Learners, however, constantly contest the teachers' dominant understanding, by drawing upon their own funds of knowledge, which were their attempts to gain power. By referring to their own life experiences, and making reference to their shared understanding of local

knowledge, some learners attempt to disrupt the power positioning in the class, albeit unsuccessfully. What learners do is expose the teachers' lack of knowledge of their cultural world, including teachers' failure to see these as potential assets. This results in the devaluing of who learners are, and in doing so, conflates "whiteness with knowing and blackness with ignorance" (McKinney, 2011, p. 19). Such stereotypical understandings are what Black learners face in their daily experiences, and emphasise a teacher's unwillingness to be both knower and learner in the knowledge-building process with the learners. In such a context, relationship-building based on real understanding and mutual respect is undermined.

McKinney (2011) and Fataar's (2012) arguments discussed above position an ongoing debate in South African education and research with regards to what kind of knowledge provides learners with epistemic access and schooling success. This argument is illuminated by research conducted by many within the Bernsteinian school of thought, notably with Hoadley (2003, 2006, 2007), Bertram and Hugo (2008), Young and Muller (2010, 2014) and Moore (2014). These scholars continue to add to a rich body of knowledge that focuses more on the 'what' and 'how' of classroom-based practice. Differing markedly from social justice imperatives that hold that education ought to be used as a mediating tool to develop critical consciousness in raising awareness of injustice, Bertram and Hugo (2008) call for an exploration of education in 'its own terms', so that knowledge can be researched theoretically, and as a means to epistemic access. For these researchers, exploring education in its own terms means engaging with learners and inducting them into specialist and powerful knowledge forms necessary for school. It is in the provision of epistemological access to this knowledge that social justice can be achieved. They argue that in providing learners with the necessary knowledge and skills, learners are then equipped with the ability to challenge the reproduction of inequality.

The teacher is crucial to this epistemological process, and the authors' comparative study of high school history teachers reveals how pedagogical knowledge can make a difference to what learners know. Through observation of lessons this study shows how learners at an ex-Model C school and learners at an ex-DET school have differing experiences of learning, based on what teachers provide to them. Teachers at the middle-class school had a better understanding of pedagogy, knowledge and assessment that worked to induct learners into specialised knowledge, whilst learners at a disadvantaged school were exposed to pedagogy that did not allow them to access the necessary specialised curriculum knowledge needed for

success in school. Practice of this kind fails learners in schools and does not hold any potential for future aspirations.

However, their findings echo those of Hoadley (2003, 2006, 2007), that show repeatedly how learners in working-class schools are not inducted into formal knowledge. Hoadley's (2009) study shows that this has a great deal to do with the teacher's own professional socialisation and social class identities, where teachers from working-class backgrounds favour a horizontal modality that emphasises shared community values and knowledge that does not allow learners and teachers to challenge existing social class inequalities. What studies by Hoadley (2003, 2006, 2007, 2009), Bertram and Hugo (2008) McKinney (2011) and Fataar (2012) present, however, is the understanding that teachers are crucial to the learning process. Regardless of whether one is an advocate for cultural knowledge or specialised knowledge, or a combination of both, teachers' own knowledge and teaching ability of these knowledge forms are vital. Social justice pedagogy calls for a positioning of both forms of knowledge, but emphasises high quality and high expectations on the part of teachers. Thus, the minds and hearts of teachers are crucial to education as the "interrupter of unequal life chances" (Bertram & Hugo, 2008, p. 142).

Whilst these studies position the complexity involved in trying to include all learners in education as shown above, a study by Probyn (2006) highlights the difficulty that teachers attempt to overcome in meeting policy demands. The author's study into the language of teaching and learning in Black schools highlights the dilemma teachers experience in trying to deliver the curriculum to mother-tongue learners. Probyn's (2006) study into the language practices of Grade Six Science teachers in four poor schools in the Eastern Cape shows the dominance of the English language as a means to access social, economic and political power. Three consecutive lessons were observed by the researcher, and teachers were interviewed about the perceptions and attitudes of having to teach in English. What Probyn's (2006) research confirmed was that the language of teaching and learning was a barrier to learners' learning, where learners were not able to engage in meaningful ways with the curriculum. However, despite these difficulties, and a lack of professional development, teachers still believed learning in English was beneficial, because of the power associated with the language.

This is a finding that is echoed by Moodley (2009), who conducted research into integration in Indian primary schools, but indicates also that this is a belief that black parents shared as well. Teachers made attempts to devise strategies to bridge the home language with that of the school, to help learners both cognitively and affectively. Despite material constraints and the lack of textbooks, teachers still made attempts to help learners acquire the necessary knowledge. This was done through code-switching, and the use of examples from learners' everyday experiences, by way of helping learners to understand. Teachers used the chalkboard to draw diagrams and pictures, or used real-life examples, all in an attempt to aid conceptual development. Learning was modelled and scaffolded, so as to extend learners' knowledge.

However, despite all these strategies, Probyn's research exposes the dire needs to develop teachers professionally. Teachers need support in meeting the needs of the learners linguistically, as well as how to traverse material constraints. Most importantly, however, her research illuminates the need to develop teachers and address teachers' own pedagogical limitations. Teachers must be trained in how to plan lessons that raise the cognitive demand of the subject, as well as support the language development of learners, as a means to seriously address the questions of access, quality and equity for the majority of South African learners.

The issue of language as a means of equity and access is experienced not only within the teaching of English but in mathematics as well. Research in mathematics and mathematics education by Adler (1998), Adler and Setati (2000), and Setati (2008) expands on this complexity of teachers' work towards equity and access, where language is a political question that informs their personal and social practices. Both Adler (1998) and Setati (2008) express the need to understand mathematics teaching and learning so as to properly understand how equitable mathematics teaching and learning can improve outcomes for learners. What their research reveals is the complexity that surrounds teaching in South Africa. Not only do teachers have to negotiate policy, but also societal and parental demands that reinforce the dominance of English in a land that is multicultural and multilingual. They also present the dilemmas that confront teachers, as they navigate their own personal opinions surrounding language, and solving these pedagogical dilemmas proves more complex, with choices and decisions being multi-layered.

Both these researchers looked into the use of English as the language of teaching and learning as a mediating tool for epistemic access to the learning of mathematics. Adler's (1998) research into the practices and thinking of six teachers in multi-lingual schools in South Africa delves into the pragmatic reasoning of teachers to ensure that teaching and learning took place. Using lesson observation and interviews, teachers discussed their dilemmas of using English to teach learners who had differing levels of English proficiency. Some of the teachers themselves were also not English first language speakers. Findings reveal that teachers had three dilemmas that they tried to negotiate, namely that of whether or not to use code-switching. The teacher found that using learners' everyday knowledge without careful thought and planning does not make mathematics meaningful. Having to locate words like '*less*', '*more*', '*most*' and '*greater than*' from the mother-tongue and then relocate these words into the mathematical discourse showed that code-switching in multilingual classrooms is complex. The second dilemma involved a teacher who experienced issues with whether or not to validate the meaning that learners bring to a mathematical idea, to allow learners a voice, or to try to ensure learners develop the required communication needed to articulate their thoughts to show epistemic access. For these teachers, using language in meaningful ways to enable epistemic access was important to their practice, but involved multiple ways of thinking and negotiating the dilemmas they experienced.

These dilemmas are seemingly absent from the teachers in Setati's (2008) research, where the six intermediate teachers in a township school tended to provide learners with the necessary linguistic and social capital associated with English. For these teachers, using English in the mathematics classroom was a political issue, where teachers tried to present both ideological and pragmatic reasons as to why mathematics should be taught in English. The symbolic power associated with the use of English underpinned their need to prepare learners to use English effectively. But in addressing English as a political issue, they failed to provide learners with the necessary epistemic access to mathematics. The hegemonic and ideological underpinnings that surround English as a language do not stimulate alternative views, and thus, epistemic access to learning mathematics is not fully realised. Their focus was on the learning of English in a mathematics class, but not on how English can be used to enable epistemic access to mathematical content and knowledge.

The Grade 11 learners who were also part of the study believed that English was the language that would provide them with access to employment, and like the teachers, reinforced the

hegemony around English learning. Surprisingly, two of the six learners were able to divorce language from mathematics learning, believing that they could learn mathematics regardless of what language it was taught in, and where, for one learner, using her home language instead gave her necessary epistemic access to understanding mathematics. Despite the complexity of views towards English and mathematics in this circumstance, all the learners believed that the language of learning and teaching ought to be English, mostly because English was widely positioned as the language of success, both nationally and internationally. The hegemony of English in some schools presents very little choice for teachers and learners.

2.4.5 The difficulty of meeting policy and theoretical imperatives of social justice and equity

Whilst the studies above provide an understanding of what is needed to ensure quality education, the literature presented here depicts the difficulty of working towards social justice and equity imperatives. There is no doubt that teachers are crucial to the education process, as Govender and Muthukrishna's (2012) case study research has found. Their case study of one high school teacher's interpretations of social justice imperatives, as stipulated in the curriculum policy, highlights the support that teachers require in trying to assume such a role in pedagogical practice. Using critical pedagogy to analyse interviews, these researchers reveal that social justice is interpreted against the teacher's own reality, and is a pragmatic response to her classroom situation, complete with various tensions and contradiction in trying to teach for social justice.

What this vital study makes clear is the dire need of professional development of teachers, which focuses specifically on social justice and equity. Given that these are policy imperatives, allowing teachers to simply be guided by their own interpretations, sets them up for failure and frustration. Whilst Sam, the teacher in the study, had high expectations of learners, respected the diversity of her learners, and her classroom practices emphasised critical thinking, and learners as crucial to learning and teaching process, she did not have a critical understanding of social justice herself. Govender and Muthukrishna (2012) explain that Sam's classroom practice was limited to that of traditional multiculturalism, which did not take into account issues of power, and instead her practices reproduced inequitable relationships between different groups in the school. Thus the teacher failed to provide learners with opportunities to question and challenge societal and social practices of inequity

and oppression, mostly because she did not critically engage with her own personal assumptions, and the way in which this influenced her pedagogical practice.

A study by Martin and Ngcobo (2015) however, reveals the possibilities that exist when teachers are exposed to social justice education. Their research into the practices of teachers involved in a social justice in-service programme shows the difficulty that still exists despite teachers' knowledge of social justice. Using data from 20 students' self-reflective action research reports, the authors argue that teachers' social justice practices are embedded in strong pedagogical orientations that depict teachers' commitment to high quality education. Teachers in the study taught in primary schools across KwaZulu-Natal, but mostly in deep rural schools. Using their personal self-reflective narratives, teachers mapped their trajectory of social justice learning, and their narratives explain the complexities of trying to work with social justice imperatives in high poverty contexts. Teachers understood education as a political act, that education had implications for learners' future, and that any work towards social justice required challenging established societal, institutional and personal norms. To teach effectively, teachers adapted their teaching and learning to make it relevant to the context.

Contextual factors proved difficult to negotiate, as there were differing understandings of what was important for community members, parents, learners and teachers. Teachers took on their role as teachers working for social justice to help break the cycle of poverty with which most of their learners were faced. They developed positive relationships that were critical to this endeavour, for teachers felt emotionally stable learning environments created the conditions to easier induction into quality learning. Often teachers would challenge institutional practices, or taken-for-granted behaviour like drunkenness and laziness that they felt were detrimental to the learning of their children. This often resulted in them being marginalised and alienated by their teaching community. They, however, acknowledged their own personal responsibility and accountability for learners' results, refusing to shift the blame elsewhere, and endeavoured to engage in learning and teaching in more effective ways. This is in keeping with Taylor's (2008) argument that in order for there to be some improvement in education, teachers must be prepared to assume responsibility for their own practice and to exercise agency and enterprise. Teachers displayed a sense of agency in ensuring that their own learners had access to quality education, which they believed they could provide. What is also significant about the research by Govender and Muthukrishna

(2012) and Martin and Ngcobo (2015) is the continued expectations of policy and social justice and equity tenets, which position teachers as the saviour of society. Their research, however, did not deal with the implications of taking on such transformative roles on a personal level.

This research imperative is highlighted in Perumal's (2014) research into the difficulties teachers encounter in living up to their role as transformative teachers in disadvantaged communities, which is one of the few relevant studies on teachers' narratives of difficulty. Perumal (2014) researched the dissonance between the material tensions that emerge when trying to enact critical pedagogical tenets in post-apartheid South Africa. For the author, the demands placed on teachers (whose personal historical narratives and professional training and development took place during apartheid) are at odds with what Perumal (2014, p. 21) terms the "romantic idealism" embedded within the democratic ideals of transformation and created a sense of discord between what teachers were able to do and what was expected of them by policy. This issue has received marginal attention and this study seeks to underscore it. Her narrative research into the experiences of South African and refugee female and male teachers in disadvantaged contexts in Johannesburg revealed the challenges that exist in fulfilling their transformative role. Some of the challenges include their personal history of spousal abuse, managing disability, racism and xenophobia.

Moving between narratives of pleasure and pain, the issue of place became crucial to the teachers, and made determinations about what kinds of relationships were able to be fostered with learners. Teachers focused on developing their pastoral role, due to the high level of need amongst learners, whose lives were wracked by domestic violence, murder, drugs and extreme poverty. Perumal's (2014) research also focuses specifically on the personal narratives of teachers that show how, despite their own personal trauma, these have to be set aside in the face of such extreme need from learners. This is significant, as not much research has dealt with the trauma of teachers' own experiences. In trying to fulfil their expectations of critical pedagogy, teachers have to mask their own psychological and emotional trauma, and instead exhibit dedication, faith, joy and commitment. Their narratives highlight the material and practical considerations of teaching that involve not only the mind, but also the heart, time, energy and attention that is implicit in teachers' practice. Teachers' pedagogic performance in such contexts requires that they promote the spiritual, mental and physical

well-being of their learners, often at the expense of their own well-being and where their own trauma must be denied.

Studies conducted by Meier (2005) and Vandeyar (2010) have shown the complexities of trying to implement multicultural education in desegregated schools. Given desegregation policy now, teachers' knowledge of how to respond to diversity and difference becomes significant. Vandeyar (2010) researched eighteen teachers across primary and secondary schools in three provinces in South Africa. Findings from classroom observation and in-depth interviews reveal that teachers across these schools developed particular ways of responding to the diversity evident in their respective schools. Some teachers developed a colour blindness or assimilationist approach in developing relationships with learners. In this approach, the cultural and diverse linguistic capital that learners brought to the task was completely ignored, with learners expected to assimilate into the dominant institutional discourse that serves to reinforce racism and linguistic discrimination. For Meier (2005), this was because teachers feared that standards would be lowered with the integration of other race groups into a dominant school.

The teachers in Vandeyar (2010) study who used the multicultural approach, tended to 'celebrate' difference reminiscent of 'surface culture' (Sleeter, 2012), but structural power relations that reinforce racism were ignored, and rendered attempts made at equity superficial. Meier (2005) therefore questions the relative worth and advantages associated with the kind of multicultural education that fails to deal with real issues of ethnicity, racism and difference, and strongly ignored embedded patterns of privilege and power. In ignoring the inherent structural inequities, racism and other forms of oppression are individualised as ignorance. In Vandeyar (2010), the practices of three teachers, however, showed a real attempt by teachers to recognise difference but also to integrate this into their classroom practice. These were for teachers who reflected on their practices and attitudes in attempting to meet the needs of learners who were now part of their schools. Relational social justice and equity was pivotal to the building of affective relationship, and these were nurtured. These teachers situated learners' experiences as crucial to learning in order that they develop a sense of belonging and through the dialogue process issues relating to racial oppression, identity construction and cultural practices and norms were discussed with the aim of respecting and protecting human rights. Teachers were reflective of their classroom practices, and altered their practices of assessments and planning to better acknowledge diversity. Knowledge

constructed in the classroom was representative of cultural hybridity, which created a space for dialogue and positive identity construction. These teachers' practices were attempts by teachers to acknowledge difference as an asset.

2.4.6 Concluding remarks

In this literature review, I traced the philosophical and theoretical tenets of social justice and equity. Research internationally focuses specifically on teachers' knowledge and use of these concepts and approaches in making learning meaningful for learners. The various traditions of multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching, critical pedagogy and social justice pedagogy provided a framework against which to measure teachers' success in meeting these goals. In South Africa, the situation is quite disparate. Policy imperatives situate social justice and equity as goals or ideals. This proves difficult to implement without professional training, and thus, teachers' practices reveal a pragmatic, contextual, complex and contradictory ways of working towards social justice and equity.

Chapter Three: Conceptual Framework

3.1 Introduction

This chapter develops a theoretical and conceptual argument to understand and account for teachers' practices of social justice and equity. The chapter also clarifies the philosophical and sociological tools used in this knowledge-building process. These tools helped in understanding teachers' attempts to work for social justice and equity. The chapter begins by providing an understanding of my decision to use a multi-perspectival approach to understand the multiple realities, experiences and practices of teachers (Boltanski, 2011). Thereafter, I consider my own epistemological positioning and social justice lens, which is heavily influenced by Boltanski's theory of emancipation. This is followed by a description of Bourdieu's theory of social practice as a way to show how individuals' practices are both determined by practice, illuminating ways in which they could be agential. I use the theory of Boltanski and Bourdieu as a broad framework, and thus I do not provide dense explanation of the theory. The theoretical concepts of Basil Bernstein's theory are then explored as a crucial mediating device to understand teachers' pedagogical practices. Finally, theoretical and conceptual resources from Social Justice Theory and Social Realism are discussed as a means to understand the nature of knowledge, learning and pedagogy.

3.2 Theoretical Bricolage

It was critical to find the most appropriate method to explain the teachers' work towards social justice and equity. I needed to develop a set of theoretical and conceptual tools that would provide me with a lens to view the world, and to cognitively explore and understand it. I had envisaged that the various theoretical and conceptual perspectives would enable me to think about teachers' practices of equity and social justice in new and alternative ways. Not only did the theoretical and conceptual perspectives provide me with the tools to explain the social world, but they were also influential to the design principles, methods and analysis used in this study. Given my ontological and epistemological assumptions, I thus embraced a multi-perspectival approach. The work of Pierre Bourdieu, Basil Bernstein and Luc Boltanski, along with Social Realism and Social Justice perspectives, provided me with the necessary language of description to do this effectively. I also draw on concepts from theory and literature across various disciplines to understand society and also teachers' social justice and equity practices within the schooling context.

Denzin and Lincoln (2008, p. 8) have argued that the theoretical bricoleur “works between and within competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms” in order to interpret the reality of the participants. This theoretical bricolage provided me with the required flexibility to move between the various interpretative paradigms, and explained my logic in data transformation. Rogers (2012, p. 4) indicates that using a “multi-perspective description though not ‘more correct’ than any one interpretation on its own, adds depth, rigor and multiplicity to inquiry”. This multi-faceted approach is representative of an “inductive empirical struggle” (Gates, 2000, p. 25) that I experienced, in order to find an appropriate framework that might have best captured the complexity of the lived realities of the teachers (Kincheloe, 2008). The complexity arises given the understanding that my research focus is on equity and social justice, which can only be understood relationally. Thus, it was necessary to understand and conceptualise this dialectal relationship between the ‘social’ context and the ‘practice’ of the teachers, or the individual and the social.

The analytical framework of the study is underpinned by the moral complexity of working towards what is fair and just. Social inquiry into this moral complexity allows one to understand factors that both constrain and inhibit the realisation of these ideals, as well as accounts for the various perspectives of the teachers in this regard. In this study, teachers themselves constantly presented and evaluated their varying practices of social justice and equity against competing personal and societal values and norms. This allowed for a reflection of a personal sense of agency (Taupin, 2012). Their practices and sense-making exposed the fragility and uncertainty of reality, and often in responding to contextual demands, new tensions and contradictions emerge. This complexity could only be explained using a conceptual framework gained from literature, and empirical studies across various disciplines that used a variety of theoretical approaches. Concepts and theories from various disciplines and fields provided me with a rich, powerful lens by which to analyse data. As I analysed the data, new understandings and ideas emerged that could not be explained by any one theory alone, where concepts were taken from across the literature to provide rich analysis. These concepts are not explained here, but are explained fully in the data analysis and literature chapters, where they prove more illuminating.

The work of Bourdieu and Boltanski were used to broadly frame this research, and so an in-depth explanation of their theories is not provided. I also acknowledge the incompatibility of these two theories but Celikates (2012) and Gond and Leca (2012) provided a useful means

to reconcile them in the study. It was important to take participant accounts seriously, whilst at the same time, to still position myself critically given my social justice anchors. The study required a critical social justice voice, together with a Boltanskian lens to challenge the exteriority of the researcher and this meant strategically positioning my thoughts between somewhat contrary views. Thus, Boltanski became influential in claiming an epistemological home for the study, which situates teachers' voices and critical capacity as central to analysis. Bourdieu and Boltanski together helped me to understand the complexity of teachers' work towards social justice and equity. Despite broader structural, contextual and personal constraints, teachers continued to negotiate and navigate their context in order to work towards social justice and equity.

Celikates (2012) has indicated that critical social theory identifies social structures and mechanisms at the macro-level that impact on people's practice – often reproducing social inequality. However, what appears to be absent is that whilst certain social conditions are constraining, this does not prevent actors from being able to be reflexive, nor from using their critical capacity to negotiate these conditions. Bourdieu proved useful in analysing the historical biographical narratives of teachers, and the influence this had on their practice, as well as their identity. I therefore used Bourdieu's theory of power to counter Boltanski's theory, which does not account for power in a comprehensive manner (Barthel-Bouchier, 2008).

What Celikates (2012) proposes instead is the incorporation of critical theory into analysis. Taking Boltanski's critical capacity theory as a starting point, he indicates that "this should not lead us to attribute an epistemic authority to the perspective of the participants, which is immune to being put into question from a theoretically informed point of view" (Celikates, 2012, p. 161). I thus positioned my study between these two opposing views; one that sought to position teachers as central to the study, with the critical capacity to understand their life-worlds, but also to look at what conditions exist that may impede the teachers' ability to exercise this critical capacity. This allowed me to reflect on teachers' positions in the study. In this way, I responded to critiques of both Bourdieu and Boltanski to understand how teachers' practices of social justice and equity are (re)interpreted (re)negotiated in order to allow new understandings to emerge. This emergent approach allowed me to understand how teachers were negotiating spaces and places in ways that responded to context. Data analysis required that I respond intuitively, and thus literature and concepts helped me to effectively

capture the complexity of teachers' arguments. In following this emergent route, I could perform Boltanski's appropriated imperative from Latour (2005, p.12) to "follow the actors". I now present my epistemology using Boltanski's theory of emancipation, as appropriate to my study.

3.3 Positioning Boltanskian Epistemological and Philosophical Research Assumptions

3.3.1. A pragmatic understanding of my role in the research process

Boltanski and Thevenot (2006) and Boltanski (2011) from the French pragmatic school indicate that it is not only the sociologist or academic who is capable of critiquing society, but that ordinary social beings or actors have the necessary language and modes of explanation to do this as well. Boltanski (2011, p. 4) argues that critical sociologies of domination rely on social science or the sociologist, namely, the expert, to "paint a picture of the reality subject to critique" (Boltanski, 2011, p. 4). This overemphasis of the ability and capability of sociologists is opposed by French pragmatists (Boltanski & Thevenot, 2000, 2006; Celikates, 2006, 2012; Boltanski, 2011; Guggenheim & Potthast, 2011; Jagd, 2011). For these pragmatists, reality in micro-interactions cannot be explained by experts who have no knowledge of this reality that is experienced by others. This claim by critical theory is characteristic of asymmetrical power relations, where it is only the sociologist who has the ability to unmask power relations for others. For Boltanski (2011), such a relationship creates enduring power dynamics that are "constantly duplicated to the point of colonizing reality as a whole" (p. 2); and does not account for other explanations.

Boltanski (2011) indicates that Bourdieu's theory situates people in deficit ways. Boltanski (2011) finds this problematic, for what Bourdieu is essentially arguing is that people are unable to interpret and understand their own world. Instead, he argues, Bourdieu advances a force, illusion, or ideology that causes people within society to misunderstand and misinterpret their actions. The systemic domination to which people are subjected escapes their consciousness, and prevents them from knowing that they are being oppressed. Instead, people are seen as mere spectators in the process that impacts so profoundly on their lives. Any understanding of their social reality is relegated to that of 'false consciousness.' Conversely, Boltanski (2011) argues that actors are able to unmask "social forces, and instances of exploitation and domination" (Boltanski, 2011, p.14) and as a result of this critical capacity, critical researchers need to position social beings as the starting point of any research endeavour, and to acknowledge actors "capacities for realising [...] their true

interests and desires, for fashioning new interpretations of reality and placing them in the service of a critical activity” (p.15).

Following on from this understanding the directive from Boltanski (2011), therefore is to follow the actors themselves, to be able to have a clear and explicit understanding of reality. With this in mind, his pragmatic framework was utilised to ensure that the teachers’ struggles for recognition, their voices, predicaments, joys and hopes were foregrounded during data analysis. The sociology of critique puts forward a framework that helps to analyse how “the actors themselves designate the being that make up their environment [...] and in doing so, help to perform the social world” (Boltanski, 2012, cited in Taupin, p. 531). By privileging the voice of teachers who, as lay people, are generally excluded and silenced by sociologists, the study instead frames these teachers as reflective beings and producers of their own lives and stories (Kincheloe, 2004). Teachers here do not operate from a belief system that constructs them as passive, but rather, they engage cognitively and creatively in responding to questions of a moral nature.

3.3.2 Recognising the critical capacity of teachers

In this study, relationships and the burgeoning, building and maintaining of relationships proved instrumental. It became apparent that in the research process, any knowledge-building that illuminated the complexity of teachers’ work could only be achieved through the establishment of a relationship of mutual trust and respect. Teachers shared conversation, discussion and observations with me about their daily teaching lives, and in my reflection, it became obvious that I wanted to present a non-essentialist narrative of teachers’ voices. These were teachers who worked in places that were difficult and demanding, where their personal meanings and perceptions of working in these arduous spaces needed to be centralised. In such a context, teachers’ identities, practices and agency were mutually shaped and constituted, and thus, simple deductions and conclusions could not be achieved. This was not an easy space for me to be in, and I found it difficult to find my epistemological home (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2005).

My supervisor, Wayne Hugo, insisted that I find new explanations for old ‘problems’ and this was crucial to the development of my relationship with the participants and the research itself. His challenge centred firstly on the manner in which I viewed the participants, and on what kind of knowledge could be produced *because* of this relationship. His insistence that

we can no longer see teachers as devoid of critical thinking and reflexivity to articulate their practice proved challenging. Influenced by Boltanski and social justice literature, I began to understand the participants as the controllers and constructors of knowledge. I thus made the decision to use another lens that was mindful of teachers' reflexivity and capacity and where I was not the expert (Boltanski, 2011). This brought into question my understanding of reflexivity as a taught skill. I recognised the primacy of the voice of the teacher, and the reflexivity of working in a context unknown to those outside of it, where teachers possessed experience and personal development that differed from my own. I could no longer relegate teachers' lived realities as that of 'false consciousness' (Hugo, 2012), but instead acknowledge teachers' diverse forms of knowledge and experience (Kincheloe, forthcoming).

Boltanski (2011, p. 3) has asserted that human beings have the ability to critically reflect on, for example, schooling and education, as a moral endeavour and can creatively and intelligently make sense of their practices and lives. His theory situates agency, autonomy and capacity of people as important to understanding both common sense rationalities and lived realities (Gond & Leca, 2012). Using this explanation, I could, for example, know that teachers in this study were very aware of injustices evident in society, and could express their anger, confusion and indignation towards this. For them their work towards social justice and equity was complex and difficult, but they also recognised it as a common good that must and should be realised. They were also not only motivated by self-interest. Their core personal values, which included religious affiliations, provided them with the means to develop certain kinds of relationships with their learners, and their pragmatic responses to learners and their contexts were often judged against personal, institutional, societal or religious values and norms (Dromi & Illouze, 2010). They showed that they had in-depth knowledge of their contexts and their learners' lives. Moreover, their own views and identities influenced the manner in which they acted out their values, giving credence to the "complex competences at work in ordinary courses of action" (Bénatouïl, 1999, p. 384).

Using this understanding, I was able to focus my research on how teachers as social agents recognised the injustice and inequality evident in their contexts and the manner in which they questioned the 'reality of reality' (Boltanski, 2011) of localised agreements. Teachers' practices and understandings revealed that social justice and equity were multi-dimensional, and mediated concepts. Blokker and Brighenti (2011) agree with this understanding of plurality, given that we experience and understand the world in differing ways. Teachers'

own practices of equity and social justice were neither simplistic nor straightforward. Their practices straddled a binary divide, bringing into question the simplicity of either reproducing or challenging the status quo.

Teachers also did not suffer oppression and domination passively or unknowingly. Instead, teachers' work, actions and thought-processes were complex, and represented constant dilemmas and questioning. Within the same practice, teachers challenged and reinforced the status quo (Celikates, 2012). Their reflections, practices and thoughts were representative of their sense of agency and autonomy. In responding to the pragmatic needs of context and learners, they used their own personal histories as incentives for ways to act in the present. Linking past memories of inequality to the present inequality helped to produce a story that made sense. These critical moments revealed teachers' work as both varied and contradictory (Boltanski & Thevenot, 2006; Celikates, 2006; Gond & Leca, 2012). Being able to be critically reflexive requires an outward performance in the social world, where there is constant negotiation and re-negotiation of the rules and regulations. In negotiating the rules, teachers were able to produce or reproduce fragile local agreement. Thus, our sense of the world and our place in it is irreducible to one another (Blokker & Brighenti, 2011).

For French pragmatists, this is representative not only of the uncertainty inherent in the educational and social landscape, but also of people's struggle for recognition and voice. For Boltanski (2011) uncertainty is seen as something that invades the world, and it can never be fully captured, understood or described, but it is a permanent and durable feature of social life (Gond & Leca, 2013). My study attempted to understand the multiplicity of teachers' actions and thought processes in this uncertain reality, and to investigate ways in which actors make sense of this reality and world. Given the fragility of society and the various options available to teachers to justify their positions, we can come to the realisation that this could only occur if actors or people had critical and reflexive capacity. This precludes us from viewing people as unaware of the world, but instead, people are seen as practically and pragmatically orientating themselves in different social contexts and spaces. It is then possible to see that a plurality of understanding exists that is characteristic of the reflexive nature of people as they engage with the world. Thus, for pragmatists, action and reasoning cannot be viewed as embedded in structures of norms, rules and habitus, but rather is realised in the process of acting itself.

Epistemologically, then, this research privileges the voice and knowledge of the teachers as the best articulators of their realities. It attempts to capture the worldview of teachers, not as uncritical subjects incapable of understanding their own position and interests in the system. They were not the bearers of a ‘false consciousness,’ and they instead participated in the educational system both consciously and knowingly. I hold that the utterances of these teachers are expressions of their own engagement with the system and are expressions of true value and worth. They operate with a complex sense of justice, they have both dreams and righteous indignation, can unmask unfairness, and are able to recognise undesirable behaviour. However, in acknowledging this, it was also necessary to understand the ways in which teachers were not able to negotiate their positions in agential ways. To examine this problem, I refer below to Bourdieu’s theory of practice to provide a more nuanced understanding.

3.4 Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice

In this section I discuss Bourdieu’s theory of social practice in an attempt to show how an individual’s practices are impacted by social structures. The concepts of habitus, capital and field are discussed as a means to understand teachers’ practices of equity. These concepts were used to understand the conscious and unconscious dispositions that enable particular kinds of interactions and actions by the teachers in the study. I make a link between social structure and the nature of human agency, as ways to understand the social and political practice of teachers.

3.4.1 Introduction

Bourdieu (1990) reifies the complexity of a situation such as that in which teachers work towards a dynamic goal like social justice and equity. He offered the means to understand the interaction that occurs between the objective social structure and teachers’ subjective personal dispositions, which may account for why teachers work in particular ways and for particular outcomes. He thus provided me with the tools to analyse the relationship between human agency and the structural determinants that impede it. Insight was sought regarding how teachers use the different forms of capital, power and habitus to negotiate different life opportunities for learners (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002). Individuals like teachers, are able to create, change, reproduce and transform social practices through their actions (Webb et al., 2002). Bourdieu adds that social interactions, behaviour and practices in everyday life are governed by structural forces, and uses the following formula: $(\text{Habitus} \times \text{Capital}) + \text{Field} = \text{Practice}$ to capture these interactions, behaviour and practices. In order to have a

concrete, holistic understanding of what teachers do, these concepts must be understood as part of a continuum (Davey, 2009). Not only does Bourdieu help to expose the structured and material forms that inequality might take, and has historically taken, his formula also shows the manner in which this impacts on teachers' social justice and equity practices. This, then, provided ways to understand how and whether human agency is possible, and what influences practice.

3.4.2 Bourdieu's understanding of habitus

Bourdieu indicates that the habitus is "a system of durable, transposable dispositions which structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representation" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53). It is largely, but not completely, an unconscious process of learning particular dominant rules, values and dispositions in the daily practice of our lives. We are taught this in the everyday interactions and experiences of family life, schooling life and wider society i.e. the socialisation process. This process is a conditioning, an unconsciousness occurrence that provides us with the necessary knowledge of how to perform and act out our daily lives or is an orientating practice (Bourdieu, 1989). This generative scheme is durable because we are moulded and constructed by the habitus and it determines who we are and what we should be.

The habitus is also transposable, and can generate our behaviour according to particular contexts. Bourdieu (1977) argues that the habitus "produces individual and collective practices and hence history, in accordance with schemes engendered by history" (p. 82). This historical conditioning is important to understand, for it enables practices to become "internalised as second nature and so forgotten as history", but it is still actively present, as the past (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 56). It is this second nature, taken-for-granted understanding that is used to evaluate any new experiences and knowledge, which is tacitly used to understand the game of life. These become patterns of behaviour that are no longer thought about, but are merely performed habitually. Practice and experiences come to be regarded as unconscious, embodied routinised acts, shared by all in the same social group.

The habitus is also a structuring device that shapes and determines our particular dispositions, which are reflective of dominant structures in the environment (Jenkins, 1992). These dispositions are related to the kinds of capital that we have access to, depending on the social positions that we occupy in society. The habitus reproduces dominant beliefs, values and

norms through the use of symbolic power and cultural capital. Sullivan (2002) and Mills (2008) indicate that the habitus of some learners resonates with that of the school, and these learners are more affirmed and valued within the schooling system.

Bourdieu (1977, p. 72) indicates that despite the habitus compelling people to act in particular ways, it is also a “strategy-generating principle, enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations”. It is here that Bourdieu indicates that agents are ‘free’ to strategise. This was an important understanding for my study, for, whilst teachers are able to strategize and are ‘free’ to take on new dispositions, it also happens within a particular structure that may not allow this to occur. Thus, the habitus and its ability to structure lived experience show the complexity of teachers’ practices. In this way, new experiences and knowledge can then either be reproduced or transformed. It is then possible to understand the habitus as both generative and structuring, the constraints of which people struggle against in order to claim new positions. For Bourdieu, habitus transcends determinism, but Kenway and McLeod (2004), question whether in fact there is space for people to improvise, to claim agency, and to be creative. It is this understanding that was crucial to my study. In using the concept of habitus, I was able to understand more clearly the concept of free choice, or agency, within a “structured structure” (Bourdieu, 1990, p.53).

3.4.3 Capital as a mechanism of power

Capital is a Marxist concept that Bourdieu adapted to include economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1983). Capital operates within a system of exchange. It includes all goods, material or different resources that social actors would regard as valuable and worthy to acquire and own within a particular field. Cultural capital is an important analytical tool that proved vital to this study. For Bourdieu (1983), cultural capital provides the person who has it with advantage and power. He distinguished it in three different forms: embodied (lasting dispositions in mind and body that are culturally valued), objectified (possessions), and institutionalised (e.g. certificates). Cultural capital defines social agents’ objective positions in any social space and is linked to habitus and symbolic power. It is a concept whose currency is linked to that of status. Thus, one ought to see cultural capital as those resources that are needed for performing everyday life. As researchers, like Crossley (2005) and Munk and Krarup (2011) suggest, this concept should enable an analysis of the setting that generates inequality and the impact this has on individuals. Bourdieu and Bernstein indicate that schools cannot be seen as systems that can liberate and enhance the social

mobility of children, even though opportunity and access is available. This is because the education system reproduces the dominant class structure, and working-class learners lack the cultural capital to engender success and negotiate the system. Cultural capital is inextricably linked to symbolic power, for it presents and constructs reality for people. This reality is understood and experienced differently by different social groups. The true nature of power is misrecognised, as it is naturalised and accepted by all within the particular field.

It becomes even more powerful when it becomes an unspoken and unconscious tool to make sense of our reality. It is a case of where “the visible ... hides the invisible which determines it” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 16). Bourdieu (1983, 1989) shows how, for example, middle-class families have access to this cultural capital and power, in both the objective form and the embodied form (Jenkins, 1992; Crossley, 2005). It serves to naturalise and normalise social advantage and disadvantage, and its reproduction is masked, or hidden. Culturally acquired dispositions in this embodied and habituated form are seen as natural for groups that are valued by society, and thus in this way, social hierarchies become legitimised (Crossley, 2005). Schools reproduce this legitimacy through the process of symbolic violence (Jenkins, 1992). Those who are the ‘natural’ inheritors of a social world have in-depth familiarity of ‘their’ world that excludes those who don’t have this knowledge (Jenkins, 1992). Thus, middle-class learners are those to whom the structure of a school’s social game is most tailored and results in the restriction of access to for example working-class learners.

This restriction for Bourdieu (1990) results in working-class learners being subjected to symbolic violence. Bourdieu (2000) argues that actors or agents who do not have this legitimate claim to capital are likely to fail at a game marked by unfairness, “for one forgets that social games ... are not fair games. Without, being strictly rigged, the competition resembles a handicap race that has lasted for generations” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 214-215). Empirical studies that use this theory show how differentiation within an education system is engineered, making social mobility little more than a farce for the vast majority of learners. In this ‘rigged game’ the educational success of subordinate classes is largely pre-determined (Harker, 1984; Gates, 2000; Sullivan, 2002). Mills (2008) suggests that Bourdieu’s theory might be used as a means to understand the work of teachers who try to provide educational opportunities to transform the habitus of marginalised and disadvantaged learners. This is pertinent to my study. It is through their pedagogical practices and actions that teachers become agents of change. It is in this way that they can broaden learners’ access to different

forms of capital, and so circumvent the *rigged* game within education. By seeking alternative pedagogies, such teachers can empower learners, rather than reinforce the pedagogy of poverty that describes many poor schooling contexts (Haberman, 1991).

3.4.4. Fields

The concept of the field for Bourdieu is characterised by social interaction and power:

It is a field of forces, whose necessity is imposed on agents who are engaged in it, and a field of struggles within which agents confront each other, with differentiated means and ends according to their position in the structure of the field of forces, thus contributing to conserving or transforming its structure (Bourdieu, 1998 cited in Reed-Danahay, 2005, p. 134).

Bourdieu uses the concept of field to “capture the differentiation of society into distinct sectors or worlds” (Crossley, 2005, p. 80). Fields are relational spaces and a person’s practices within the field must be seen as a product of interactions that occur within a particular field. Fields however, are also arenas that are characterised by constant struggles and competition over access to resources or capital, social positioning and power which are unevenly distributed. Mills (2008) argues that Bourdieu’s concept of field is not an enclosed space but rather that it is a dynamic and interactive space where possibilities to change and challenge the system exist. To negotiate the field effectively one has to be in command of or have knowledge of the written and unwritten rules of the game. Agents who belong to a dominant group have access to capital, which provides them with the ability to recognise and use the rules to their advantage which has the effect of reproducing the status quo.

Within the field of education, for example, middle-class learners have knowledge of these rules and can therefore strategically manoeuvre the game of schooling to their advantage. Thus an important feature of field is the understanding that there are those who are allowed to participate in the game whilst denying access to those who have no knowledge of the rules of the game. This is pertinent to teachers’ practices in South Africa for the field of education is a highly unequal one with resources, capital and wealth being unevenly distributed. Whilst in the context of schooling it may appear that all learners are provided with equal access, the field of school is an unequal space.

Bourdieu (1990) argues that agents or teachers need to be reflexive of their actions and practices and to provide marginalised learners with the necessary capital to enable them to negotiate their schooling. Teachers therefore have to make explicit the rules of the game to learners who are disempowered by the schooling system because they have scant knowledge of these rules but are expected to play by them. In this way, teachers can transform fields that have habitually marginalised working-class learners and have had a negative impact on their future (Crossley, 2005). Bourdieu's theory enabled me to understand the manner in which teachers redistribute power and capital to learners through the provision of learning opportunities as well as the teaching of the necessary academic skills and knowledge that is required by the schooling system which would allow learners to successfully negotiate schooling. Further, teachers serve an important function in ensuring that they are affirming of learners' values, dispositions and norms which may be contrary to those of the school but have repercussions for learners' ability and capacity to succeed in school (Mills, 2008). In the section that follows I provide an understanding of Bernstein's theory of pedagogy to understand teachers' pedagogical practices.

3.5 Understanding Teacher's Pedagogical Practices using Bernstein

3.5.1. Introduction

In this section, I present the conceptual and theoretical resources used here to understand the democratic imperative of social justice and equity. These concepts in turn form part of a discussion of knowledge, learning and pedagogy, following from Bernstein's theoretical framework. A study concerned with social justice and equity is fundamentally about power and specifically the power inherent in the educational system and inherent in the practices of teachers. Schooling practices broker differential access to knowledge that supports the existing status quo of society. Thus, the pedagogical practice of teachers would either work to produce or reproduce existing forms of knowledge. Bernstein's theory of power, knowledge and social experience proved useful in attempting to analyse these pedagogical practices and has the most explanatory power to unpack the relationships between teachers' practices and learner performance. I discuss the various concepts relevant to his theory, namely that of the pedagogic device, classification and framing, as well as horizontal and vertical discourses. These concepts provide initial explanations for how and what kind of knowledge is produced, reproduced and distributed, and how this provides understandings for learners' performance. Thereafter, I position the social realist argument of the importance of powerful knowledge as a means of access, not only to schooling success, but future success as well. Lastly, I present

the arguments raised by social justice theorists with regard to knowledge and schooling as a social practice.

Bernstein argues that in order for democracy to be realised, citizens must believe in the pursuit of such a society. Democracy requires that collectively, people have a stake in the building of society. At the heart of Basil Bernstein's theoretical *oeuvre* is his passionate belief that schooling is fertile ground for the realisation of social transformation and the democratic ideal. Education and schooling should provide all learners access to democratic and pedagogic rights towards their individual enhancement, inclusion and participation (Bernstein, 1996, p. 6-7; Bourne, 2003). One of the ways in which these pedagogic rights can be realised is through the provision of knowledge to learners.

The first right that Bernstein foregrounds and that is relevant to my study is that of individual enhancement. Individual enhancement and hope are inextricably linked. They provide learners with the means to imagine a better future. This right, however, cannot be realised without an in-depth understanding of the social, intellectual, personal and material constraints that exist and that prevent the realisation of a future (Bernstein, 1996). This study explores the constraints mentioned and the manner in which teachers (un)successfully negotiated these constraints in their teaching practice. Teachers' negotiations were acts of resistance and survival, or 'survivance' (Vizenor, 2008), and pragmatic responses to the constraints that (dis)enfranchised learners evident in the context. For Bernstein, individual enhancement involves the understanding that possibilities exist within the education system, and that all learners should have access to these possibilities in order to feel included on an individual, social and political level; it is the sense of seeing oneself as being valued (Bourne, 2003).

However, more importantly, Bernstein (2000) indicates that enhancement is not "simply the right to be more personally, more intellectually, more socially, more materially; it is the right to the means of critical understandings and to new possibilities" (p. xx). Being able to participate actively and acquiring 'critical understandings' and 'new possibilities' implies a particular kind of pedagogic relationship. Within the schooling context, both teachers and learners need to be able to understand that different kinds of knowledge provide access to different forms of an imagined future. Pedagogical justice requires that teachers' power and control are used to position learners as successful acquirers of all forms of knowledge (Fataar, 2012).

The second right of inclusion speaks to issues of individuality, sociality and respect for diversity. Inclusion, for Bernstein (2000), also amounted to a sense of *communitas* (p. xx). Bernstein does not explain this concept fully, but it has proved essential for this study. My understanding of *communitas* that emerged from the study is based on teachers' experiences and knowledge. These are affective bonds that existed between the teachers and learners in the study based on historical, social, emotional and religious values and experiences. Teacher's understanding of *communitas*, therefore, is similar to that forwarded by Rapport and Overing (2000), who paraphrase the concept from Turner (1982) as "recognition, however fleeting, of a generalised social bond between all human beings, and between them and the world [...] for societal continuity" (p. 36). The practices of *communitas* by teachers in the study were underpinned by the need to engage with learners on a personal level, towards the realisation of their self-worth and potential. For Rapport and Overing (2000), *communitas* moulds individuals and community in ways that are liberating and socially transformative. It follows that if inclusion is not realised, then the sense of *communitas* cannot be realised.

Bernstein's third principal of education involves the right to participate in education. Participation for Bernstein (1996) involved a practice that "must have outcomes" (p.xxi). But the right to participate in education is heavily constrained by complex social, material and personal factors that characterise schooling. In such an environment, social justice and equity as democratic values are difficult to achieve. Learners are dependent on the opportunities and experiences presented to them by teachers. Thus, the opportunities and experiences must be made available to them in order for them to successfully negotiate the learning context and reap the benefits for their future. Bernstein (1996) indicates that when there is unequal distribution of images, different types of knowledge, opportunities and resources, the right to participation, inclusion and affirmation are lost. If schools only provide marginalised communities with differential and unequal levels of participation, meaning and outcomes, the result is disengagement on the part of learners (Mc Gregor et al., 2005).

3.5.2 Understanding Bernstein's theory of knowledge as a medium of access

There is widespread debate within the sociology of education about school subject knowledge and the role played in the reproduction of social inequality. The division has been mostly based on ontological and epistemological issues, with knowledge viewed in dualistic ways (Balarin, 2008; Edwards, 2014). Knowledge is either viewed as neutral, objective and value-

free *or* it is imbued with power relations often reflecting the interests of those in powerful positions that results in exclusion for many learners. Here I present a Bernsteinian argument about the nature of knowledge and the relationships between knowledge and power. Within this argument, I situate the views of social realists like Young and Muller (2014), who argue for the re-introduction of powerful knowledge as a tool for social justice and access for marginalised learners. Bernstein drew heavily on Durkheim, who stressed the distinction between sacred and profane knowledge. Sacred and profane knowledge were used differently and for different purposes. This influence is to be seen in Bernstein's own differentiation of vertical and horizontal discourse. Thereafter, I consider the arguments raised by social justice theorists around the usefulness of knowledge that learners already have.

The debate calls for a consideration of the classification of different types of knowledge and the *use value* (Zipin, Fataar & Brennan, 2015) and also an understanding of the power relations that underpin this value. Social realists like Young, Moore, Maton and Muller are strong proponents of situating powerful knowledge at the centre of education. Their theory is a counter response to the constructionist and positivistic understanding of knowledge and education, for they theorise knowledge in its own right. For these theorists, understanding the differentiation of knowledge and its value is imperative to access for learners. It is disciplinary or powerful knowledge, which provides learners with the necessary skills and capacities to acquire capital that is needed for the socio-economic world. Denying learners opportunities to access this powerful knowledge is 'criminal' and unjust, and is also one of the "most fundamental inequitable practices within education" (Openshaw and Walshaw, 2014, p. xiv). Bernstein and other social realists provide insight into the way in which knowledge can carry different value and power, and thus potential; and that understanding knowledge in this way has implications for the pedagogic rights of enhancement, inclusion and participation. Thus, the ontology of knowledge is at the centre of their study as well as my own.

3.5.3 Durkheim's knowledge as 'sacred' and 'profane' in society

Bernstein (1996, 2000); Moore (2013, 2014) and Young and Muller (2014) indicate that the idea of 'powerful knowledge' can be traced back to Emile Durkheim. For these theorists, human beings can be seen as differentiating and classifying beings and knowledge can be understood in the same manner where we make judgements that there are some forms of knowledge that are 'better' than others because these forms of knowledge explain reality

differently or in more comprehensive ways (Young & Muller, 2014). Durkheim, in his analysis of knowledge, drew a distinction between knowledge that was profane and knowledge that was sacred. Knowledge not only differed in purpose but also in structure.

Profane knowledge refers to the way in which people make sense of their everyday world and respond to it in practical, immediate and particularised ways. These were concerned with issues of daily living e.g. farming. On the contrary, the sacred represented the world of religion, and involved speculations about the world after death or in an 'afterlife'. This involves "systems of related but unobservable concepts" (Young, 2003a, p.102) that provide a form of philosophical objectivity and truth, rooted in the collective and not the individual. People can use objectivity and truth to make logical and reasoned connections between objects to understand the world (Young, 2003a). Durkheim posited that these two forms of knowledge are intellectually distinct and they serve different purposes. The sacred or 'theoretical' knowledge has understandings of objectivity and truth whilst the profane or 'everyday' knowledge explains reality as experienced daily (Young, 2003a; Young & Muller, 2014). Durkheim's distinction between theoretical knowledge and that of the everyday was not to impose a hierarchy of value, rather, to account for both forms of knowledge, as they are crucial to the survival of mankind.

3.5.4 A Bernsteinian understanding of knowledge

Bernstein's work is influenced by various theorists, ranging from Durkheim, Marx, Weber, Vygotsky, Bourdieu and Foucault (Young, 2010a; Moore, 2013). What is fruitful in using Bernstein's approach is the links he makes with the macro-level of the schooling system with what occurs in the micro-level of the classroom. In relation to school, Bernstein (2000) indicates that schools serve to both produce and reproduce existing social and economic hierarchical relations through the manner in which knowledge is distributed for the purposes of social control. Schooling and education must provide epistemic and social access to disciplinary knowledge. This kind of access situates social justice and equity at the centre of Bernstein's argument.

He indicates that these hierarchies are embedded in educational discourse and that "how a society, selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers public, reflects both the distribution of power and the principals of social control" (Bernstein, 2003a, p. 156). Bernstein sought to understand what principles existed that could

explain how knowledge becomes transformed into pedagogic communication, and whether this knowledge could be described as legitimate, official knowledge, or local knowledge. This could then provide an understanding of the way in which learning is successfully achieved, and what could prevent the acquisition of legitimate knowledge. Thus social power is embedded in the way in which *knowledge is structured*. For Bernstein and the social realists that followed him, powerful/official knowledge has a particular internal logic that is different to the everyday knowledge. They conceptualise that strong boundaries exist between this formal, disciplinary knowledge and that of everyday forms of knowledge. Young (2011) and Young and Muller (2014) in particular have been adamant in the belief that enabling access to powerful disciplinary knowledge is an act for social justice and equity.

In order to understand the theory of knowledge, Bernstein's constructs of boundaries or classifications provide insight into how knowledge is socially constructed and maintained within the schooling system through differential access. Bernstein refers to esoteric knowledge as linked to vertical discourse, whilst mundane, common-sense knowledge is linked to horizontal discourse. These two forms of knowledge have different internal values (Bernstein, 2000; Bourne, 2003). Complex, profound or esoteric knowledge involves the use of theory and concepts, whilst mundane or common-sense knowledge concerns the everyday world (Bernstein, 1996, 2000, Moore 2013). Bernstein recognises that both these knowledge systems are important and necessary, but indicates that they are valued differently within specific contexts. Each discourse is unique to the other, and they are characterised by their own structural rules and conventions. Maton and Muller (2007) points to the normative underpinnings of esoteric knowledge, noting that they establish norms and values that hold society together. Bernstein described how these different forms of knowledge have specific implications for education and schooling. For Bernstein (1999) vertical, esoteric or official knowledge in formal school contexts are evident in subject-based academic curricula like that of mathematics and English. He says:

Vertical discourse takes the form of a coherent, explicit and systematically principled structure, hierarchically organised, as in the sciences, or it takes the forms of a series of specialised languages with specialised modes of interrogations and specialised criteria for the production and circulation of texts, as in the social sciences and humanities (Bernstein, 1999, p. 159).

Thus, school knowledge or official knowledge was juxtaposed against local, common-sense everyday knowledge. Knowledge gained via disciplinary or specialist knowledge is valued and relevant for the future. The boundary between the different discourses is strongly framed and controlled, and what is relevant for schooling contexts is disciplinary or powerful knowledge. ‘Distributive rules’ determine which social group will have access to vertical discourse and the different forms of knowledge that are contained in it. Vertical knowledge acquisition is vital in schools. Here learners must be taught in ways that allow them to understand disciplinary knowledge as a coherent system of meaning. This would enable them to move beyond the particular and to view knowledge as integrated and connected (Wheelahan, 2007).

Bernstein (2000) also theorised that vertical discourse has two forms of knowledge structure, namely hierarchical knowledge structures and horizontal knowledge structures. Hierarchical knowledge structures found in science, for example, are “coherent, explicit and systematically principled (and) hierarchically organised” (Bernstein, 1999, p. 159). Within this knowledge structure, new knowledge can be generated. This is because there is emphasis on developing a persons’ ability to work in the abstract. However, this is dependent on how teachers facilitate this move from the basic to more complex understandings.

Horizontal discourse, on the other hand, is everyday ‘common sense’ or ‘life-world’ (Bourne, 2003) knowledge. It is “oral, local, context dependent and specific, tacit, multi-layered, and contradictory across but not within contexts” (Bernstein, 1999, p. 159). Horizontal discourses are concerned with operational and procedural forms of knowledge acquisition like the tying of one’s shoes (Bernstein, 1996). Knowledge gained here is informally and differently acquired, mostly as a result of the socialisation process or the modelling of behaviour. It is also gained through direct or explicit instructions from members of the family, peer groups or immediate community members. Whilst these discourses may be horizontal, Bernstein points out that discourses are not, however, equal, with some being regarded as more important than others. What is regarded as important is linked directly to differential social relations and access to power. Thus, in this way, certain ways of thinking, believing and acting are imposed from outside, as a “major cultural relay” (Bernstein, 1999, p. 160). School contexts, however, are different, and concentrate on the achievement of outcomes, which is measured by competency and performance that cannot be acquired in the everyday.

This structural difference between formal (vertical) and everyday (horizontal) knowledge forms the basis for an exploration in this study of how specialised academic curriculum or powerful knowledge (Young, 2010a, 2011) is made accessible to learners. Bernstein cautions against the teaching strategy of ‘recontextualising’ particular segments of horizontal discourse into the content of learning areas. He indicates that using this as a strategy does not necessarily translate into more effective practice or acquisition of school knowledge. He has insisted on the classification of pedagogic (vertical) discourse and informal, everyday common-sense discourses (horizontal). What is needed, however, is for teachers to help learners recognise the kinds of knowledge that is required, and then to realise the required outcome needed to form particular meanings. Teachers’ everyday practices then become significant, as they discursively position learners, and structure conformity to classroom rules and regulations, both implicit and explicit.

One of the reasons why he cautions against this is that horizontal discourse is context specific, more often, to a world outside of the school context. Attempting to impose this on vertical, official or school discourse is difficult, given that knowledge here is structured differently. It becomes more relevant for the skills and knowledge of the academic curriculum to be made relevant to the out-of-school context instead. Bernstein argues that introducing horizontal discourses into the classroom can sometimes disadvantage students, by preventing them from accessing powerful vertical (academic) knowledge.

Horizontal and vertical discourse is different, not only in terms of structure, but also in terms of how each of these discourses are acquired. Vertical discourse forms part of the school academic discourse and is taught explicitly, but there remain distributive rules which determine who has access to it. A great deal of this is because of distributive rules in the school context, which determine what type of knowledge is relevant and who it is relevant for. He indicates that there is no relation or even transferability of knowledge within horizontal discourse itself and that one cannot explain horizontal discourse outside of itself. Thus, attempting to recontextualise knowledge from the horizontal to the vertical discourse is problematic and does not ensure positive achievement. More often, horizontal discourse becomes subsumed by vertical discourse (Bourne, 2003). If anything, Bernstein (1999) argues, “segmental pedagogy of horizontal discourse is directed towards acquiring a common competence rather than a graded performance” (Bernstein 1999, p. 161). Thus, integrating

school knowledge and everyday knowledge to access learning is a complex issue that must be properly analysed and delivered.

Bernstein argues that the classification of knowledge into a distinct field of specialised/powerful knowledge and everyday/horizontal knowledge is an expression of power. Relations of power classify, define, legitimate and impose boundaries between social categories and are thus concerned with relations between boundaries (Wheelahan, 2007). But relations of power are also concerned with defining relations within boundaries, thus making determinations about what is valuable and should be included, and what knowledge is less valued and thus excluded (Wheelahan, 2007). For Bernstein, classification of knowledge is essentially the voice of power. Teachers' decisions about what knowledge is recontextualised and presented, and to whom this knowledge is presented, is an act of power. Classification is strong when the content of the knowledge is well-insulated from others by strong boundaries (Bernstein, 2003b), where the intent is to keep things apart and to emphasise distinctions. Alternatively, when boundaries are weak, then things are brought together. However, whether boundaries are weak or strong, they are always bound up in power that legitimates dominant understandings. Bernstein argues that power relations are covert, and are hidden by the principle of classification. Classification begins to become naturalised or normal, and thereby assume legitimacy and the "identities that it constructs are taken as real, as authentic, as integral, as a source of integrity" (Bernstein, 1996, p. 21). Attempts to change the principles of classification would be a threat to that of a coherent individual and would disrupt relations of the natural social order (Singh, 1997).

Framing refers to *who* controls *what* (Bernstein, 1996, p. 27). In other words, it concerns the control over *how* knowledge is transmitted within a particular context (Bernstein, 1996). It relates to the instructional practice of the teacher and the relationship between the teacher as a transmitter of knowledge and the learner who acquires the knowledge (Bernstein, 2003b, 2003c). It regulates not only the form of the interaction between the teacher and learner, but also establishes the locus of control over what knowledge is selected, how it is sequenced, paced and evaluated (Bernstein, 1996; Bourne, 2003).

In schools in South Africa, knowledge is externally framed as it is prescribed in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy¹², and teachers will select the content to be taught to learners. However, the teacher, through the process of recontextualisation, also selects what content to focus on for a particular lesson. Pacing relates to the speed at which the content of the curriculum is taught. Teachers make pedagogical decisions based on learners' ability to understand the material or content presented to them that structure how quickly or slowly they progress. Sequencing or scaffolding refers to the order in which lessons are taught to enable learners' grasp of content. Sequencing is the building blocks of a lesson, and if learners have access to strong building blocks, they are able to learn effectively. Both sequencing and pacing have explicit and implicit rules (Bernstein, 2003c, p. 66). Evaluation refers to the criteria determined by the teacher or the curriculum as to what should be assessed, so as to make judgement about learners' ability to grasp knowledge and skills.

Through the process of selection, sequencing, pacing and evaluation, teachers will distribute access to the material and cognitive benefits of schooling. Framing refers to the relations of control, and in a context where the teacher has control over how knowledge is sequenced, selected, paced and evaluated, then the relationship is strongly controlled. If the acquirer or learner is able to have control over the learning context, then framing appears to be weak, because learners have an apparent degree of control over the learning. However, this control is regulated by the teacher, and legitimises a particular kind of communication. Framing is present in the pedagogical relationship, and is used to analyse the form of control found in the lesson, where classification is used to analyse the content of the lessons.

Two systems of rules regulate framing. These are the rules of social order, and rules of the discursive order. Rules of control over the social order are referred to as regulative discourse, and this is realised in the kinds of interactions that occur between the teachers and the learners. Rules of the discursive order are concerned with the selection of content, or the instructional discourse. The manner in which knowledge is framed will influence the way in which the voice of power is expressed. It will shape the form the voice will take, as well as the way the 'message' of power will unfold. Thus, Bernstein referred to framing as the message of power.

¹² The Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAPS) is the official curriculum for all public schools in South Africa. It has replaced The Revised National Curriculum Statement curriculum.

Power and control for Bernstein are analytically distinct concepts, but are dependent on each other (Bernstein, 2000, p. 5). In such a context, what is imperative is that teachers themselves have specialised knowledge and that their pedagogical practice will then determine the extent to which learners will have epistemic access to powerful knowledge useful for their learning. Teachers and their specialised knowledge are organisational assets that are imperative to epistemic access. Questions arise when this organisational asset is absent, and when principles used to select and teach knowledge is determined by those who do not have the required know-how to make informed pedagogical decisions. In such a scenario questions are asked about, what knowledge do learners have access to and what orientations to meaning are learners subjected to?

3.5.5 Problematising knowledge

In this section I trouble the understanding of knowledge and equity. Social realists call for the recognition of powerful knowledge as the sole means for learners' access to schooling. This, for them, is a social justice and equity concern. I thereafter position the arguments made by other researchers, which call for the consideration of the social aspects dealing with knowledge. Together these arguments present an understanding of the issue of social location and culture, which are significant to the understanding of teaching and learning.

3.5.5.1 Social realism and powerful knowledge

Young and Muller (2014) and Moore (2014) provide an understanding of the necessity of establishing powerful knowledge not only as a sociological construct, but also as a means for realisation of social justice and equity. Social realists argue that disciplinary or specialised knowledge is central to the pedagogic relationship between teacher and learner. Using their analytical lens, one is able to analyse teachers' instructional practices as either enabling, or constraining of cumulative deep learning i.e. the acquisition of powerful knowledge. Researchers in this field are highly critical of constructivist, positivist and post-modern thoughts on knowledge and truth, claiming that these are relativistic arguments. The proliferation of research in this area has not allowed for the analysis of knowledge as both an object and subject of study (Maton & Muller, 2007). Knowledge itself has become devalued and its purpose and value are no longer regarded as essential to learning. In South Africa, the new Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) is influenced by the Social Realist arguments on powerful knowledge. This argument holds that providing learners with the powerful knowledge that is in the curriculum is a social justice endeavour, where learners

previously denied this access during apartheid will be afforded this opportunity (Zipin, Fataar & Brennan, 2015).

For Jones (2008), Young (2010) and Zipin, Sellar and Hattam (2012), the current institutional logic evident in curriculum is underpinned by an exchange value logic. Thus, knowledge is not valued for its own use, but rather as a means to acquire capital. This capital is found in skills, values and competencies, but is restricted to knowledge acquisition, being solely for economic and social purposes. According to Young (2008) and Young and Muller (2014), this has led to the marginalisation of disciplinary or powerful knowledge. Social Realists make a distinction between powerful knowledge and knowledge of the powerful, with Young indicating that powerful knowledge:

refers to what the knowledge can do or what intellectual power it gives to those who have access to it. Powerful knowledge provides more reliable explanations and new ways of thinking about the world and acquiring it and can provide learners with a language for engaging in political, moral and other kinds of debates (Young, 2008, p. 14).

He also indicates that powerful knowledge has a very different focus:

on the knowledge itself – the structure, what it can do and how it is organised for the production of new knowledge and acquisition of existing knowledge which is new to the student. A working definition focuses on its purposes and conditions for its production and access (Young, 2010b, p.4).

Thus, for Young, powerful knowledge is cognitively empowering and herein lays its importance, for it provides the means to learning new knowledge, creating new knowledge and the critical tools to critique the social realities in which learners find themselves. Powerful knowledge is thus a mediating tool for daily life. However, this knowledge is knowledge that is produced by specialists within intellectual or academic communities (Edwards, 2014). Thus it differs quite substantially from the informally learned everyday knowledge. There is crucial link between accessing powerful knowledge, the curriculum and the right to education (Edwards, 2014).

Powerful knowledge provides the ability and capacity to use abstract, decontextualized knowledge. This, for Young, is extremely important to understand, and brings into play the social realist argument of epistemic access, which is vital for learners for it “enable(s) students to transcend the limitations of everyday experience and develop critical awareness of the forces structuring their own live” (Beck, 2014, p. 72). Thus, this epistemic access is essentially providing capacity to realise alternative ways of understanding the world beyond the everyday. But this access is premised on learning “how to become a participant in a practice”, which for Morrow (2009, p.77), necessitates the learning of “the intrinsic disciplines and constitutive standards of the practice”. Morrow (2009) and Muller (2014) point to the understanding that powerful knowledge has particular procedures, rules, conventions and processes that provide the mediating tools to engage meaningfully with that knowledge. Thus, power is an enabling force or feature. For social realists, this allows one to then see knowledge in its own right, outside of the social interest of those most powerful in society.

The argument pertinent to this study is the understanding of the existence of different types of knowledge or knowledge differentiation found in curriculum. Because it has particular structures, the knowledge found in the curriculum, or powerful knowledge rules and conventions, require a particular approach to the manner in which it is taught. It requires that teachers themselves have an understanding of the nature of knowledge in order to make pedagogical decisions that will determine the epistemic access of learners to this knowledge. Through specialist knowledge, teachers are able to make decisions about what knowledge should be selected, how this knowledge will be sequenced so that learners ultimately gain understanding of this knowledge, how this taught knowledge is paced, and then evaluated. This ultimately has implications for whether or not learners will gain access to this powerful curriculum knowledge. This knowledge and access is very dependent on teachers’ knowledge of their teaching subject and its content. Teachers must provide learners with the means to make cognitive shifts that can only be acquired through the manner in which knowledge is sequenced and paced (Hoadley, 2007).

Studies by Hoadley (2007) and Hoadley and Ensor (2009), reveal that often, teachers in particular contexts do not have this curriculum knowledge, and the question then arises as to what kind of access is then pertinent. Poor pedagogical practices of sequencing, pacing and evaluation will lead to learner exclusion from this powerful knowledge. Hoadley and Ensor

(2009) also indicate that teachers from a working-class background tend to be confined to a community code that does not enable the interruption essential between home and school. Classrooms in South Africa are often characterised by low operational skills, low cognitive demands, disengaged instruction devoid of purpose, and repetitive, busy work under the control of the teachers (Hoadley, 2003, 2007, 2012). Moreover, epistemic access is prevented when learners are not provided with the opportunity to learn the rules and conventions of this powerful knowledge. They are thus unable to develop their capacities and abilities to use knowledge effectively, and the chances of them being able to produce knowledge for themselves are limited.

What learners are exposed to, is fragmented knowledge (Player-Koro, 2011) that is neither useful nor purposeful, but is empty of purpose and value. In such circumstances, learners are not inducted into powerful knowledge, useful for learning and also for future possibilities. Thus, distributive rules provide differential levels of access, and studies by Hoadley (2003, 2007, 2012) and Hoadley and Ensor (2009) reveal that the socio-economic background of learners is highly dependent on teachers and the epistemic access that they are given. This is further exacerbated by the home environment, which is not an effective site of acquisition. The result is further restriction of access to powerful knowledge and the perpetuation of social and cultural exclusion (Beck, 2014, p. 74).

Thus, the tenets of their argument are based on the following: firstly, knowledge must be based on particular structures and codes that are developed and produced by those in universities and subject organisations; secondly, it is based on the understanding that knowledge is objective and that it can surpass the context of its production. It is vital to distinguish between specialised knowledge with that of the everyday. Thirdly, that within epistemic communities, there are “cognitive (truth-seeking) norms” that are irreducible to “power interests” (Edwards, 2014, p. 176). Lastly, that the sites of production in intellectual fields are not uniform, where this lack of uniformity produces completing and differing claim to knowledge. This is the nature of the truth-seeking task that ensures the continued production and reproduction of knowledge.

Bernstein and Social Realism offered me an external language of description to analyse how knowledge is differentiated i.e. on the one hand sacred/vertical/powerful knowledge, and on the other, profane/everyday/horizontal knowledge. This differentiation allowed the

illumination of teachers' positioning in relation to the knowledge boundary in their practices as a means for access. I could also then understand knowledge as an object in its own right – an object that has its own properties and power. The argument in this thesis confirms the imperative of powerful knowledge. This is undisputed for Balarin (2008) and social justice theorists, as well as researchers like Delpit (1988), Ladson-Billings (1995a, 1995b, 1995c), Gutiérrez (2002) and Gutstein (2007a). Access to powerful knowledge is emancipatory and empowering; for it does provide learners with the mediating tools to negotiating power and influence (Hoadley & Jansen, 2009).

3.5.5.2 Social justice arguments about knowledge

Bernstein's theory is a theory of knowledge and not a theory of 'knowers' and incorporating the social relationships that exist in education was vital to this study on equity and social justice, where focus is placed on knowledge as a relational concept i.e. "how knowledge itself shapes social practices, identity, relation and consciousness" (Maton & Muller, 2007, p. 21). Understanding knowledge in this manner allows the complexity of equity and social justice to emerge. Education is a highly differentiated landscape providing differing levels of access, quality, resources, achievement and possibilities for future career options, but these are also strongly conditioned and constrained by gender, race and social class (Jones, 2008), and these have implications for how equity and social justice are understood and practised. Equity and social justice refer to the provision of opportunities for *all* learners to benefit from the educational and instructional practices of teachers. In this, a dialectical relationship exists, with teachers positioned as morally responsible for learners' academic, personal and social well-being. Thus, social location or place and culture play a significant part in the teaching and learning process. Teachers have to have one eye firmly on the students, and the other on the context (Ayers, 2009), where issues of identity, culture and community exist and develop based on contestation and difference (Jones, 2008).

Social justice and equity concerns then centre around various factors that both enable and disable the realisation of both the above material and non-material social goods (Boaler & Staples, 2008), whilst paying careful attention to the social, cultural, economic and political realities that influence learners' lives. I therefore looked to concepts from various other theorists to provide me with the lens to understand the complexity of teachers' practices. As stated previously, Bernstein's pedagogic rights of participation and inclusion are illuminating for the social justice argument. If teachers and learners are to feel that they have a stake in

society, they need to be able to participate in knowledge production. I argue here that the overemphasis on powerful knowledge as an almost exclusive means to access does not fully capture the complexity of working towards social justice and equity. This complexity involves not only *what* kind of knowledges are distributed to learners, but also *how* this knowledge is distributed, to fully understand the relational space that is indicative of school teaching and learning. In such a working space, educational work must start from a particular standpoint in the contexts of inequality and inequity, where the landscapes of those ‘least favoured by society’ (Rawls, 1971) need to be claimed. Knowledge therefore needs to be understood differently, in the manner in which it mediated the pedagogical relationship between teachers and learners. The standpoint of teachers and learners needs to be taken into account.

Atweh and Brady (2009), Edwards (2014), and Zipin, Fataar, Brennan (2015) indicate that for social justice and equity to be achieved by all learners, there needs to be a compromise between the way in which knowledge is currently understood and furthered in the curriculum. The compromise should not foster a choice between knowledge as objective, neutral and value-free or that of the subjective ‘standpoint’ of learners knowledge. Instead, for Zipin et al. (2015) curriculum knowledge that is made available to learners needs to incorporate both their lifeworld knowledge, as well as the official powerful knowledge. Curriculum knowledge should be reconciled in such a manner so as to avoid both relativism and systematic discrimination of already marginalised groups (Edwards, 2014). For Connell (1992) this means the provision of a counter-hegemonic curriculum, that places equity and social justice at its core, where the interests of all, but *especially* those of the least favoured (Rawls (1971), are considered.

Knowledge needs to be understood in all its complexity and given the current focus of powerful knowledge as central to the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements in South Africa at present, it becomes especially more important. Balarin (2008) and Edwards (2014) question the objective, value-free characteristics of powerful knowledge, arguing that there is clear demarcation of where and who produces knowledge. This is the same knowledge that is acquired in the process of teaching and learning. For them, this suggests an asymmetrical relationship between producers (found in universities) and acquirers (learners) of knowledge. This is an inherently unequal relationship, based on dependence, and suggests an uncritical dimension on the part of learners and knowers of already institutionalised knowledge. The

power embodied in powerful institutionalised knowledge provides the ‘gold standard’ against which all are evaluated, often resulting in exclusion of the majority of learners. This, for Connell (1992, p.143), “blurs the notion of intellectual power with social recognition,” creating deficit understandings of those who are not allowed access to it.

Balarin (2008) and Edwards (2014) question this restricted channel of knowledge production asking what “prevent[s] ideological distortion and asymmetrical privileging” (Edwards, 2014, p. 178). What is absent from the social realist account is the focus on the material and subjective experience, and how this must be intrinsic to any account of knowledge production. This, for Balarin (2008), is contrary to social justice and equity imperatives, as situating powerful knowledge so concretely into the curriculum fails to acknowledge diversity and multiculturalism. Such knowledge also fails to engage with the political and social issues that are a daily part of the lives of learners and teachers. Balarin (2008) does not dispute that the ability and capacity to engage with these issues are acquired by means of powerful knowledge, but for her, the sense of responsibility implicit in this cannot be reduced to knowledge-based decisions. She argues that, these are ethical leaps that knowledge alone cannot provide (Balarin, 2008, p. 517) and can only be acquired from experience in the social and natural world.

Atweh and Brady (2009) question this centrality of thought, where official or powerful knowledge is the only means by which marginalised students can achieve success. This view fails to account for other factors that constrain and prevent this access. These researchers address the field of mathematics education, where research has been widespread and prolific. But the research carried out within the field of mathematics is steadfast in its rejection of the dominant view of mathematics as “a singular, objective and value-free discipline that is isolated from human interest” (Atweh & Brady, 2009, p. 267). For these researchers, knowledge cannot be divorced from the social and cultural context in which it was developed and which reflects the dominant worldview. This is because social structures and practices are already in place – they pre-exist any one person, and are thus partial. Atweh and Brady (2009) reject claims of relativism, arguing that being able to engage critically with knowledge from different locations allows for objectivity, and negates relativism.

Connell (1992) indicates challenging dominant and traditional curricula is difficult and prevents the setting up of alternative curricula. Thus for him any starting point for social

justice to make inroads must begin with an understanding of context. South African society is characterised by extreme disparity and this study was conducted in an “abject community” (Zipin, Sellar & Hattam, 2012, p.184), where poverty, unemployment and extreme social ills prevailed. I use this understanding in the same way that these researchers do, that is, not as deficit spaces, but more to understand the constraints that exist that prevent parents, learners and members of the community from making use of their own funds of knowledge or lifeworld knowledge in agential ways. The concept ‘abject’ indicates that people are excluded from being able to successfully and meaningfully engage in the social and economic life of society (Zipin, et al. 2012). In such contexts, people are regarded as ‘failed citizens’ who have very little to offer to society, and where the existence of coherent, cohesive community structures is limited. It is in this context where the purpose and value of education and schooling is questioned, and where social imagining of hope (*communitas*) is difficult to conceive and maintain.

Jones (2008) argues that in today’s knowledge economy, education is seen more as a positional rather than an absolute good, where knowledge is valued for the economic gain it promises. Moreover, Jones (2008), argues the present focus in the literature on knowledge as a form of cultural capital accumulation presents a view of knowledge that does not resonate with the social reality of marginalised learners, and who thus question the usefulness of such knowledge, or the imagined benefits (Norton & Toohey, 2011) associated with such acquisition. For those learners living in such “abject-liquid contexts,” (Zipin, et al., 2012, p.185), education as a positional and absolute good is difficult to achieve, given that for the vast majority, unemployment or unskilled work awaits them. For these learners, the benefits of education are difficult to imagine and the false hope that their dreams, aspirations and desires will materialise through their hard fought efforts contribute to their continued marginalisation. Instead their dreams and aspirations are unobtainable and far-fetched, and their emotional and intellectual investment (McKay, 2010, Norton & Toohey, 2011) in schooling is questioned. This prevents the possibility of a cohesive imagined community that has social and economic benefits from forming (Perumal, 2015) and instead learners withdraw from schooling because they conclude that their participation and inclusion brings no benefits and thus the claim “I don’t want what I can’t get” (Jones, 2008, p. 6) prevails. Moreover, the failure on the part of teachers to understand and incorporate lifeworld knowledge to demonstrate respect for learners, results in the experience of a sense of

dislocation, where affective bonds cannot be created. The chasm between teachers, schooling, learning and society is widened.

It is for this reason that Nieto (2004), Zipin et al. (2012) and Zipin et al. (2015) call for the positioning of ethics in curriculum work. This requires that teachers work in ethically responsive ways to create conditions of ‘re-imagining their (learners) cultural-historical present’ to create new counter-hegemonic discourses. It requires more than the belief that changes in pedagogy or even curriculum knowledge would solve all social ills of the world, but nonetheless, a recognition that “separating their reality from the socio-political context of society is like hiding one’s head in the sand” (Nieto 2004, p. 196). This places education and learning as a purposeful political activity that can only begin with engaging with the lifeworld of learners, which is essentially the recognition of place or social location. This endeavour requires a critical examination of what and how knowledge is made available to learners in school (Apple, 1978; Connell, 1992). The role of education as both a desire and a commodity must be questioned, as this sets marginalised learners up to fail (McKay, 2010).

Moll et al. (1992), Zipin, Sellar and Hattam (2012), Zipin (2009, 2013), Zipin, Fataar and Brennan (2015) call for a ‘funds of knowledge’ approach as well as for the incorporation of powerful knowledge as espoused by social realists towards making the curriculum more accessible to learners. The concept of ‘funds of knowledge’ has the same educational purpose and is similar in meaning to other concepts, for example ‘culturally relevant pedagogy’ used by social justice theorists like Ladson-Billings (1995); ‘culture of power’ and ‘community knowledge’ used by Delpit (1988) and Gutstein (2007a); ‘productive pedagogies’ (Lingard, 2010) and ‘horizontal/everyday knowledge’ (Bernstein, 1996, 2000). All the concepts and approaches mentioned above were developed by the various researchers in an attempt to ensure that the curriculum in schools was responsive to the needs of all learners but especially for learners who have been traditionally been excluded. These concepts have to some extent being explained in Chapter Two.

The ‘funds of knowledge’ approach, emphasise the value implicit in culturally valued knowledge. This recognition of culturally valued knowledge (Fraser, 1995; Jones, 2008; Keddie, 2012) is one that runs counter to that of community/cultural and life-world knowledge as deficit. These concepts from the various researchers and theorists are all underpinned by a Vygotskian understanding of culture as a mediating tool for thinking about

the world. 'Cultural funds of knowledge' in particular refers to pedagogical assets that provide the entry point for great levels of abstraction implicit in powerful knowledge. It thus redistributes the exchange value that is evident in a 'disarticulated' school system (Jones, 2008), positioning the 'virtual school bags' (Thomson & Hall, 2008) that learners bring to school as critical to not only knowledge acquisition, but also cultural capital that is crucial to academic success (Delpit, 1995).

Ladson-Billings (1995c) indicates that within schools, presenting learners with already established knowledge in the form of curriculum content that is far removed from their social realities and experiences relays messages to learners that are not affirming of their identities. Discourses in schooling and society on the subject of knowledge, ability, control and voice influence not only teachers' practices, but also the way in which learners construct their identities (Munns, 2007). In an unequal educational and social system, learners have to constantly negotiate and re-negotiate the spaces and places of school to struggle towards identities that are more positive to their feelings of self-worth (Zipin, 2013). The nationalisation of knowledge, for Zipin (2013), alienates learners positioning them as 'unsuccessful', 'unable' and 'disinterested' and leads to disengaged learners and disengaged instruction (Hoadley, 2003). Thus, teachers are crucial to this endeavour, presenting learners with opportunities that affirm their identities and constructing them as positive.

More importantly, the situating of life-world knowledge within the curriculum resonates with learners' self-concept or identities and self-worth, and provides the motivation for stronger engagement from them. As a result, learners no longer experience learning as alienating, uninteresting, and foreign but meaningful to their lives (Zipin, 2013). Learners are able to experience learning as rich, meaningful and characterised by high cognitive and knowledge complexity (Hugo, Bertram, Green & Naidoo, 2008) and intellectual demand (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b), a form of 'hard caring' (Knight, 2004). In such a context, learners can assume agential positions as inquirers and creators of knowledge. But teachers are essential to this to ensure that the intellectual quality or substantive conversation (Dooley, 2003) is maintained throughout lessons for learners to extend their sense of agency outside of the classroom. This is vital for learners, since schooling and knowledge acquisition have determining effects on their aspirations and futures, and thus, control over such determinant aspects is crucial to their own sense of power and control. Here, learners are not mere receivers of knowledge, but can function to "remake their world" (Connell, 1992, p. 142).

The ability to remake the world, as suggested by Connell (1992), requires that learners encounter critical knowledge in their school contexts. This, for social justice proponents, should be the central pedagogic aims of teachers, so as to develop both critical consciousness and disciplinary competencies (Gutstein, 2007a). For Nieto (2004) and Gutstein (2007a), these critical components are intertwined, but they need conscious realisation and effort. Powerful knowledge is powerful precisely because it is a vehicle for understanding the disciplinary conventions, procedures and concepts vital for schooling success. Delpit (1988) indicates that failing to provide learners with the ability to access this kind of knowledge is detrimental to learners' capacities. Social justice researchers and theorists argue that powerful knowledge provides the necessary tools to develop critical capacity that must be transformative. This powerful knowledge (Young, 2003b, 2010a), or classical knowledge (Gutstein, 2007), provides the arguments that show how the acquisition of this kind of knowledge is vital for community survival and future career choices. This also provides the tools to be able to challenge the tenets that decree such knowledge to be powerful. This, for Ladson-Billing (1995b) is culturally responsive teaching, since, for the author, teaching must be characterised by quality, and must be academically challenging.

Moje, Ciechanowski, Kramer, Ellis, Carrillo and Collazo (2004) and Moje (2007), indicate that the incorporation of learners' funds of knowledge or cultural world may provide meaning for learners, but note that this does not necessarily translate into a critical understanding of their world. Mere incorporation of lifeworld knowledge effects only superficial change and for a critical conversation to be developed, learners must be exposed to being co-constructors of knowledge. Instead, they argue for the development of a third space that bridges everyday and academic forms of knowledge, and where deeper understanding of who learners are and what is relevant to them can be understood. This will have influence on the manner in which youth take up identities, through the kind of classroom interaction that has consequences for how they are affirmed within and outside of schooling. In this way, learners can be provided with the necessary tools to become the agents of change. However, this ability is only created by the quality of organisational assets in the school.

Gutiérrez (2002), Nieto (2004) and Zipin (2013) all indicate that this is not an easy task. For them, teachers are required to wrestle with contradictory practices that drive their pedagogical practice and relationship with learners. On the one hand, they have to drive the democratic goals of inclusion and participation. Here, the incorporation of learners' lifeworld

is negotiated. Teachers in their respective studies understand that this builds learners' sense of value of themselves and their schoolwork, and there is an increase in motivation to participate. Learners recognise that their cultural identities are valued, and their sense of agency and control are bolstered. On the other hand, however, some teachers are aware of the inequalities that exist, where schools are traditionally based on the affirmation of those who already have cultural capital. Schools are the control systems that determine who gets access to better life chances, whilst restricting access to others. The message systems of schooling match the codes of those who have been exposed to the rules of the game. Whilst such learners may be affirmed by society because of their required credentials and the benefit that they have gained from higher social status, some students do not have the necessary ability to position themselves in ways that address issues of injustice and equity that are crucial to any democracy.

For Gutiérrez (2002) it is imperative that teachers' subject knowledge include a deep understanding of curriculum processes and imperatives, as well as the development of learners' critical knowledge to read the word and the world (Freire, 1985). Teachers have to be agents of change, and must have an understanding of critical philosophies that are, for Gutiérrez (2002), often absent. Teachers must be aware of the effects of mainstream curriculum that universalises standards that can only be acquired by a select group of learners, and where the hidden injuries of marginalised learners, who fail to learn the rules of the game are present and accepted. This requires broadening learners' competencies, to include the ability to critique cultural norms and values, and institutional inequality that restricts opportunity (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b). Gutstein (2007b) and Zipin et al. (2012) indicate that such criticality is taught behaviour, and learners are dependent not only on teachers to expose them to this, but also dependent on parents, families and the broader communities in which they live. This helps teachers to understand the contexts in which learners live and teachers teach.

In abject communities, the ability to teach for equity is severely constrained, because such communities are rife with messages that question their member's usefulness in society. These are contexts in which mere survival is difficult, and where exclusion from society is the norm. These critical socio-political questions need to be articulated in the curriculum. There is deep identification and connection with the learners' funds of knowledge. Learners and teachers together can construct possibilities for the future, through co-construction of

knowledge, which develops a sense of agency. This allows teachers to understand their teaching spaces as complex, varied and dynamic, but it also foregrounds ethical responsibility for such exposure and action, and situates the re-imagining of possibility. Learners must be given opportunities to value not only powerful knowledge, but their own knowledge as well. This is what Moje (2007) refers to as the fusing of the intellect with the moral. Thus, there is an emphasis on the fact that social justice and equity cannot be premised solely on the acquisition and pursuit of powerful knowledge and its concomitant capital (Zipin, Sellar & Hattam, 2012). For these researchers, learners' funds of knowledge must not be seen as deficit, because they are meaningful and useful. In such contexts, the pedagogical relationship is one that supports the voice and agency of all learners.

3.6 Concluding Remarks

This chapter provided insight into the theoretical bricolage that formed the broad framework for my study. I explained the influence of Boltanski and Bourdieu and the decision to position teachers at the heart of the research. I also explained and acknowledged that despite teachers' attempts to be agential and transformative, structural constraints determined the extent to which they can become powerful. I then turned to the classroom to understand teachers' pedagogical practices of social justice and equity. Here, the concepts crucial to Bernstein's argument around knowledge as a vehicle for social justice were explained. I extrapolated the arguments around knowledge to provide deeper understanding, and placed focus on social realists and social justice theorists, as vital to what kind of knowledge was important for their future success. In the next chapter, I provide insight into the methodological approach that was used in this study.

Chapter Four: Research and Design Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This thesis presents the accounts that ordinary teachers make in their daily practices about equity and social justice. It also aims to understand the broader context that influences the daily practices of these teachers. With concern for ethics and integrity in research, I present the ontological, epistemological and methodological foundations that underpin the study. I thus tried to find new ways to understand old problems and the methodological foundations of my study helped me to do this. This chapter explains in detail the conceptual stepping stones that were used to capture the lives of teachers as lived, experienced and told (Dhunpath & Samuel, 2009).

The chapter begins with an explanation of qualitative research as the broad paradigm within which I situate equity and social justice. This is followed by an explanation of the methodological approach, the research design and the research tradition (narrative inquiry) used to explore the complexity, tension and contradictions that surround teachers' negotiations of social justice and equity within the classroom. Next, the chapter outlines the research generation process, providing a rationale for the choices made with regard to the data production and sampling considerations. I also justify my decision to make use of an analytical bricolage as the most effective means to transform or analyse the data. Making sense of and transforming the data is shown to have become a practical endeavour and includes an account of a research journey of learning and relearning. Justification is offered for the use of a multiplicity of analytical strategies, which were respectful of both the grounded theory approach, and of narrative inquiry. The literature informing the study allowed for the use of concepts from various empirical studies to search for new explanations to old problems. Finally, I consider the ethical underpinnings of the research. In this endeavour, I hope to find favour in the decisions that I have made in trying to portray what is cherished, significant and respectful of the stories of the teachers in the study.

4.2 Conceptualising Qualitative Research

The research utilised a qualitative approach to analysing and interpreting the experiences and meanings that teachers bring to their natural environment. This means understanding the subjective world of teachers to which quantitative research could not provide answers. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008) qualitative research is:

...a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world [...] into a series of representations [...] qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them (p. 4).

From the above citation, it is apparent that studying people in their natural environment can enable a researcher to make sense of the practices and interactions that people engage with in their particular contexts. Teachers in this study engaged critically with their environment, which was both complex and dynamic (Creswell, 2008), and their interactions were equally complex and varied. I attempted to capture the constant (re)negotiation that teachers engaged in when interpreting their contexts, and their ability to respond to their environment. This illuminated the teachers' efforts to work with social justice as equity, where at times, their practices were at odds with their own personal understandings.

As a qualitative researcher, I acknowledge that there are no precise, logical and definitive theoretical answers to complex human issues like equity and social justice. This is compounded by the understanding that contexts have different cultural and historical underpinnings, where the way in which people negotiate and traverse these realities is indicative of creative, agential and strategic individuals. Individuals and events cannot be generalised, given the fact that ideas, perceptions, thoughts, historical processes, social, political and economic experiences evolve, and so too does the social reality in which they take place. It is therefore imperative that researchers understand social reality in its natural, temporal and contextualised state (Clandinin, Pushor & Orr, 2007; Clandinin & Huber, 2010). Given this dynamic nature of social reality, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) and Denzin and Lincoln (2008) caution those engaging in qualitative research to acknowledge and accept that the multiple possible interpretations of reality are intricate. But participants' interpretations and meaning that they attach to their ever-evolving and unfolding social realities emphasise the quality and depth that is required in qualitative research (Henning, 2005; Creswell, 2008). This allows a better understanding of the human condition and it is this intricacy that I attempted to capture (Henning, 2005; Creswell, 2008).

I was not only attempting to understand teachers' social contexts, but also teachers' own views of their work. This obviously had major implications for my role as the researcher in the research process. If the voice of the teachers were to be explored, the boundaries between the researcher and the researched had to be weakened. This was vital if their explanations of social reality was 'owned' by them, and did not come from the outside (Nieuwenhuis, 2008). This is the rationale for the decisions to adopt a narrative approach to research production, so that teachers' feelings, thoughts and actions about equity and social justice were foregrounded. Through the interactive research process, and in the data analysis, patterns and themes that emerged illuminated the frames of reference that teachers used to make sense of their practice, rather than those of the researcher. Those working within the qualitative paradigm recognise that the relationship between the researcher and the researched becomes a 'moral dialogue', where the subjective experiences of participants' reality must be respected (Cohen, et al., 2007; Nieuwenhuis, 2008, Creswell, 2008). Neither researchers nor participants are objective, politically neutral beings, and thus, the knowledge that is produced is as a result of the "subject relationships between the elements of inquiry and 'what is' and is always subjective, as it is perceived and described through the observation made subjectively by a human observer" (Nieuwenhuis, 2008, p. 56).

4.3 Positioning the Researcher in the Research to Establish Trustworthiness and Authenticity

Cohen et al. (2007) and Maree and van der Westhuizen (2008) indicate that qualitative research is about attempting to understand our social world. It follows that understanding the social world requires in-depth knowledge of a researcher's ontological, epistemological and methodological lenses which are used to make sense of the world and the research data (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006; Maree & van der Westhuizen, 2008). The chapter provides insight into the research journey, including the decisions and choices I made with regard to paradigm, methodology and method. For the researchers cited above, locating a study within a particular paradigm is essential, for not only does this speak to the affective reasons behind the study, but also determines the methodology, methods and literature chosen.

The complexity evident in contemporary society, however, required new ways of understanding and careful choices in this regard. Flick (2009, p.12) supports the idea of a complex world given the "pluralisation of life worlds" that emerge from social relations. The ontological and epistemological underpinnings of this research, therefore, run contrary to

the suggestions by Mackenzi and Knipe (2006) and Maree and van der Westhuizen (2008) and prevented this research from being firmly entrenched into one specific paradigm. Schwandt (2000) has noted when making decisions about qualitative work we “are confronted with choices about how each of us wants to live the life of a social inquirer” (p. 205). The choices that emerged during data analysis took into account Richards’ (2005, p. x) understanding that “methodologist may decry it, and experienced researchers may deny it, but researchers approaching qualitative research are highly likely to meet data before they meet method” Together, the ideas of Schwandt (2000), Richards (2005) and Flick (2009) influenced the research production and analysis process of this research study.

I have already indicated in Chapter Three the influence of theorists such as Bourdieu and Boltanski on the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of the study. The critique of Bourdieu’s work has focused on arguing that his epistemology is based on a distinction, where the layperson’s common-sense understanding of reality precludes a critical evaluation of the world, and thus the role of the sociologists is to provide this criticality (Bourdieu, 1993). Despite criticisms that his work is deterministic, his theory helped me to understand teachers’ socially constituted practices which according to him are constrained and constructed by their habitus (Bourdieu, 1990). Bourdieu (1990) prioritises structure over agency and has led to the critique of his theory as deterministic by some researchers (Kenway & McLeod, 2004).

In contradistinction to this aspect, it was important in this study that a method was found that allowed the voices of the participants to be heard. In this regard, Boltanski’s (2011) methodological dictum is both simple and demanding – follow the actors themselves. It ought to be emphasised that I concur with Boltanski (2011), that people are capable and critical enough of their own social reality. Teachers in the study had their own assumptions, motivations, attitudes and belief systems that influenced, but also corresponded with their social reality. Their stories, experiences and voices regarding equity and social justice were the medium through which I was able to fully appreciate this reality. Boltanski (2011) argues that people justify and explain their actions in pluralistic ways and the multiple voices and realities that emerged from the study were evident of this, where teachers showed themselves to be critically engaged beings. Thus, the study was respectful of both theoretical and methodological demands that gave voice to the ordinary critique that teachers working in inequitable and unjust contexts make about their teaching and learning choices. Teachers

were thus positioned as capable of producing meaning and offering interpretation of their lived actions and reality. This also provided the rationale for the use of data analysis strategies employed in the study. If I was to allow the voices of the teachers to be heard through their narratives, then it was necessary for the lens used to analyse their narratives to emerge inductively (Allen, 2011).

Thus, the epistemological implications of the research required me to enter into dialogical relationship with the teachers to construct knowledge. The teachers come into the research process as individuals, who inhabit a different space, which I did not know or understand. However, this was a space that was meaningful to my study and so their interpretations were taken as valid, and were emphasised. The study also straddles both the interpretive and critical paradigm. The study is primarily concerned with following the actors and understanding their experiences and practices of social justice and equity, but contains the critical imperative of recognising that these experiences and practices are negotiated within specific institutional, cultural and societal contexts, which are imbued with power. In following the actors, their explanations of power relations that impeded or enabled their practices were heard and given voice. I also used other qualitative methods and methodological frameworks to generate and transform my data. Narrative inquiry was used as both a method and methodology to generate teachers' stories about their practices and experiences. In trying to engender a new way of understanding social justice and equity, I used the grounded theory approach, particularly inductive strategies, to create a novel way to understand the complexity of teachers' practice.

4.4 Storying Teachers' Lives: Narrative Inquiry in the Study

As a former teacher and presently a teacher educator, I am aware of the complexity that surrounds teachers' practices and ways of being a teacher in the South African context. The challenge was to firstly explore teachers' practices and ways of being without essentialising these as typical of all Black African teachers' practices and identity. I do not position myself as an expert of their lives, but rather as the narrator of their stories and realities *as told by them* (Craig & Huber, 2007). Being the researcher, I acknowledge that I have some form of given authority in terms of the study, as I am the vessel through which teachers' stories are told, understood and heard, although this has been freely given to me by the teachers whose lives and realities and "inner world of subjectivity" (Conle, 2001, p. 28) I sought to enter and understand. The knowledge that is produced here was only possible through the building of

relationships that were established based on ethical responsibility, care and respect. I also acknowledge that these narratives represent a tentative knowing, as their stories illuminate “a multiplicity of perspectives over time and place, preserving a sense that the story could be told otherwise. It calls forth that the story is for now; it is unfinished” (Huber, Caine, Huber & Steeves, 2013, p. 223).

4.4.1 Understanding Narrative Inquiry

Chase (2005), Elliot (2005), and Hazel (2007) indicate that narrative inquiry in research continues to grow, and is quite prolific, with researchers recognising the richness and depth that is allowed in following this research approach. Chase (2005) has traced the development of the life history approach from the first half of the 20th century, detailing the points of convergence and divergence. Narrative inquiry was a reaction to previous positivist approaches, and a move towards interpreting and understanding human action that became relevant to qualitative research. Contrary to positivist and post-positivist research paradigms, narrative inquiry seeks to understand human experience rather than control, test or predict (Riessman, 2003; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007).

This approach has become popular and is being used across disciplines in health, education, criminology and social work (Connolly & Clandinin, 1990; Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2013). These researchers indicate that narrative social research has rich philosophical roots and has been influenced by humanist approaches, structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstructionism and psychoanalysis. In contemporary research it is common to find that researchers often merge these various traditions as a means to provide a more in-depth, nuanced understanding of human experience. Its prolific and widespread use often leads to a diversity of understanding, but what researchers agree on is that narrative inquiry provides an understanding of human life as complex and ambiguous.

For Connolly and Clandinin (1990), Andrews, Day Sclater, Squire and Tamboukou (2004) and Clandinin and Huber (2010), people live storied lives. Stories are the ways in which we interpret and make sense of the world and that we are “storying creatures” (Sikes and Gale, 2006, p. 1). The stories we tell present our perceptions and sense-making that are reflective of our social, historical and cultural positioning. Narrative inquiry allows one to understand “temporality, sociality and place” (Lal, Suto & Ungar, 2012, p. 6). These three features of temporality, sociality and place provide the framework of narrative inquiry and allow the

researcher to study teachers' lived experiences as a complex relational matrix (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Stories are, according to Elliot (2005), meaningful and social, and at the heart of narrative inquiry is the understanding of stories as part of an educative process. We learn about people - their practices, ideas, their past, relationships, values, beliefs and aspirations and envision new ways of (re)telling and re(making) different stories that keep us buoyant and hopeful and provide alternative futures (Huber et al., 2013).

This positioning of the personal and the social was vital for my study. Teachers' personal feelings, hopes, dreams, future goals and moral values interacted with their social, external environment and made certain practices possible whilst constraining others. In this way, narrative inquiry enabled me to analyse and view their stories in more nuanced and in-depth ways. As a result, I could provide richer, textual data of teachers' personal and professional lives, as well as the manner in which they negotiated the personal, professional and social. Thus, the narratives that teachers shared with me present subjective meanings that are relevant to their lives and experiences in their specific contexts, but also showed the temporal nature of those stories.

Moreover, in turning towards the specific, local and particular, I do not universalise and generalise teachers' practices. Teachers' stories were significant and specific to that particular time, and are reflective of Clandinin and Huber's (2010) understanding that we are constantly revising our stories as we go through life. Lal et al. (2012) indicate that social context has an influence on the experiences that people have that are important to the decisions they make and the meaning they attach to their practice. People are influenced by social, cultural and institutional narratives, which in turn constitute and shape individuals storied experiences (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). For example, in this study, teachers understood that in the schooling community issues of class, poverty, language and education were barriers to parents' ability to help their children with English. The pedagogical decisions that teachers made took into account their learners' living and learning contexts, providing the link between context, experience and practice. Thus, teachers' personal emotions and perceptions were related to the social conditions of their working and teaching lives. So, in looking at the specific, particular and local, my study made attempts to provide new ways of understanding the way in which teachers try to work towards social justice and equity, and the complexity and tension that surrounds their attempts to do so.

Their narratives allowed me to capture the dynamic nature of teachers' lives and their identities. They are representative of the dynamic and negotiated nature of identities, where the stories are also recollections of the past and told to us as a re-presentation for the present. Teachers' recollections of their past were reflective of the social, historical and cultural context at the time that had influence in some way on their values, aspirations and practices in the present. Their fragmented past of survival, marginalisation and oppression were remembered in a way that allowed them to negotiate a sense of who they were in their present. They tried to renegotiate a personal and professional identity that was more responsive to social justice and equity discourses prevalent in society. The temporal nature of teachers' narratives shows their struggles to fashion and latch onto a 'coherent identity.' A closer reading of their narratives illustrates that identities are multiple, contradictory and in constant (re)-negotiation as teachers attempt to make sense of their personal and professional lives (Andrews et. al., 2004).

In this way, I was able to understand teachers' work for social justice and equity in alternative ways that depict their work as difficult and emotionally draining, as well as the way in which broader social processes interact with teachers' lives in such a way that deepens this difficulty. Thus, narrative inquiry allowed me to understand not only teachers' personal and professional identities or subjectivities (Gill & Pryor, 2006; Søreide, 2006; Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011; Perumal, 2014), but also their emotions in working towards equity and social justice (Nias, 1996; Day & Leitch, 2001; Zembylas, 2003; Kelchtermans, 2005) and their equity and social justice practices within the classroom (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007; Kaur, 2012).

I found the use of narrative inquiry valuable for the following reasons, and represent the manner in which it is conceptualised and presented in this study. Firstly, the research focused on a significant part of teachers' lives, namely that of their professional teaching lives. That said, however, their teaching lives needed to be understood as intertwined with their personal lives, having historical implications for the ways in which they practised. Secondly, the stories of teachers allowed me to understand the complex layers of thoughts and views that my participants had that were reflective of their own culture and worldview. This allowed me to have an enhanced understanding of their sense-making process, both personally and professionally. It gave me nuanced insight into their struggles in their past, and the way in which this created meaning for their practice in the present. Teachers' beliefs, values,

experiences, hopes and vision were all bound up in twists and turns that made them who they were. In this way, their multiple identities, truths and transient meanings could be understood. For me as a researcher, this interactive, socially-situated construction allowed me to understand the manner in which teachers' lived experiences, actions and emotions shaped them in varied ways.

Thirdly, using narrative inquiry was also a logical extension of the theoretical and conceptual framework used, as it allowed me to understand the way in which social justice and equity emerged in teachers' world view and practice. Moreover, the critical capacity that teachers used in constructing their own stories provided an understanding of teachers as agential and capable beings. Teachers were "creative interpreters and constructors" (Andrews et al., 2004, p. 106) of their classroom and institutional spaces, which have been shaped by dominant schooling, social and cultural discourses around education in South Africa. Thus, teachers are constructed as agential beings, with the ability to use their social and positional power in meaningful ways. I am reminded not only of the difficulty of understanding teachers' lives and practices, but also my responsibility to properly understand their storied landscape as being and becoming, shaping and being shaped by others (Huber et al., 2013).

Lastly, research by Huber et al. (2013) shows how teachers and learners attempted to position alternative narratives or counter-narratives to hegemonic institutional and societal discourses. Teachers, and by association, their learners, provided alternative ways of working towards social justice and equity in this study that are representative of raw emotional work that is part of working in inequitable contexts. Their stories are not neat novellas of comfortable living or straightforward practice, but rather, reverberate with difficulty, despair, frustration, commitment, and hope. These are stories of agential beings trying to take control of their teaching lives, that run counter to dominant social, cultural and institutional discourses. Using this personal approach to narrative inquiry, I was able to understand the significance of the three common places i.e. temporality, sociality and place, in relation to teachers' practices of social justice and equity.

Narrative inquiry is used widely in educational research as a way to understand teachers' personal and professional lives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Gill & Pryor, 2006; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007; Smit & Fritz, 2008; Hairston & Strickland, 2011). This approach allows researchers to understand teachers' classroom practices as they negotiate their daily practice.

A central insight to the study is provided by Huber et al. (2013, p.213), who indicate that in understanding the relational aspects of schooling and educational life, narrative inquiry “embodies potential for shaping extraordinary pedagogy in education”, and that in the telling of the story, education as a phenomenon must be highlighted. As teachers formed relationships with one another, with learners, with the school, with the broader community with the curriculum and wider discourses of education, I had to come to appreciate the political nature of teachers’ practice in their attempts to build a future for their learners free of inequity and injustice.

Clandinin and Rosiek’s (2007) explanation of conceptual terms was crucial to the way in which I understood and interpreted teacher stories. For Connelly and Clandinin (1990) “narrative is both phenomenon and method” (p. 2). These authors indicate that the stories that teachers tell are a personally interpretive lens, through which people make meaning and sense of their experiences in the world. This, they indicate, is the phenomenon. Narrative inquiry is the study of people’s experiences as a story. Narratives then must be understood as the process or method that researchers use to describe these stories and represent them as narratives. So whilst people live and tell their stories of their lived experiences, the researcher “describes such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). As such, narrative research can be intrusive to participants, and relationship-building is crucial to this process.

I attended to this relationship building or sociality commonplace through the building of meaningful relationships. During the course of the research process, I developed, maintained and collaborated with the teachers in building up their narratives. Through sharing my own stories of my experiences as a teacher, I was able to develop and sustain a relationship with them. The narratives that I was able to co-construct with them included the desire to learn about why they practise in the manner that they do, in such a way that was not disrespectful or judgemental of them. The process developed a relationship based on feelings of respect, care and connectedness to shared practices and values, where the aim was to position their voice and experiences as the only way to truly understand social justice and equity in this context.

Narrative interviews thus proved essential to understanding teachers, not only on an individual level, but also in relation to the context in which they teach: the schooling context

that has its own understanding about curriculum, teaching pedagogy, responses to wider community, departmental reform policies and learners. These all come together in complex interaction that informs what is possible for teachers to accomplish. Narrative inquiry provided me with a way into understanding teachers' lives as complex, nuanced, and far from superficial (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007).

4.5 Contextualising the data production phase

My study sought to understand teachers' experiences and practices of equity and social justice in contexts that are reflective of great inequality. Below, I forward justifications for the methodological choices I made with regard to the context, as well as my decision about participants. I forward these as pragmatic realisations that I came to in negotiating the data production phase.

4.5.1 Negotiating the data production phase: Pragmatically purposeful

I was most cognisant of the fact that data production is a process permeated with power relations, which hold influence over how and what kind of data can be gathered and produced. At the outset, and in keeping with the epistemological and ontological orientations of the study, I approached this data production process with the aim of doing an ethnographic study. However, this proved to be pragmatically impossible, and thus, I was obliged to re-think the manner in which I conducted this research. I had initially planned to conduct research in the schools that were part of the KZN Treasury Project,¹³ led by the School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal (Hugo, Jack, Wedekind & Wilson, 2010). The project researched the state of education in the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal. I intended to research teachers who worked in impoverished Quintile 1 and Quintile 2¹⁴ schools, and who were making a difference in the lives of the learners. Findings from this project, as well as issues of distance, led me to rethink my decisions. In order to acquire different schools, I firstly liaised with subject advisors of mathematics and English, as well as teachers, friends and principals. I requested that they select schools that were performing well, despite inequitable conditions in the Pietermaritzburg area. A few schools were identified by the subject advisors, as well as principals, and the criteria that they used to select these schools were:

¹³ KZN Treasury Project is a report commissioned by the Provincial Treasury Department to understand the quality of schools in KwaZulu-Natal.

¹⁴ Quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools are categorised as the poorest schools in the country, and have been declared as non-fee-paying schools, with government spending the same amount of money on each learner.

- that the schools were producing good results evident from the yearly assessment tasks;
- that teachers were very involved in departmental workshops and attended these regularly; and
- that visits to these schools showed that the teachers understood the curriculum and that policy requirements (mark schedules, profiles, classroom visits) were met.

Finally, after negotiation and continuous visits to schools, two school principals were enthusiastic about participating in the research. Both these schools are indicative of and a representation of South African education rooted in apartheid, with various anomalies. These schools were Quintile 3 schools. However, the schools ‘serviced’ communities which were extremely poor, characterised by high unemployment and crime. Whilst the school itself had electricity, running water and sanitation, learners’ living environments generally did not. Thus the schools were selected purposively as matters of convenience, their willingness to participate, as well as their proximity to my place of work and home. These schools were located in the Pietermaritzburg area, and were, at the most, 15 kilometres away from my place of work. Nieuwenhuis (2008) defines the purposive sample to refer to a situation in which “participants are selected because of some defining characteristic that makes them the holders of the data needed for the study” (p. 79), and who can provide the richest possible information needed for the research. Thus, participants chosen were mathematics and English teachers, who were regarded as ‘committed teachers’ by principals and members of management, and were teachers attempting to make a difference in the lives of the learners despite inequitable contexts. Teachers did not explicitly indicate that they were teachers for social justice and equity but rather that their principals believed that they were trying in various ways to transform the lives of learners that they taught in order to provide them with better prospects for the future. In this way I was able to position teachers as working towards equity and social justice and to understand how social justice and equity unfolded pragmatically in these contexts.

4.5.2 Negotiating the selection of research participants

Happy Ville Primary School¹⁵ is a large, former DET¹⁶ school situated in a light industrial area leading into the suburbs. The school is racially homogenous, comprising only Black,

¹⁵ Pseudonym for the school.

¹⁶ DET: Department of Education and Training was a racial categorisation of schools for Black learners during

African teachers and learners. At the time of this research, the learner population was 1011, with 31 educators, inclusive of one administrative clerk, the principal and deputy principal. The school is surrounded by shacks and mud houses. The school itself is small and is situated on church land with the church situated next to the school. The school is completely fenced-off, and entry into the school is through two guarded gates. The female principal was very polite and welcoming. We spoke at length about my study and the reasons why I wanted to do the research at the school. I also presented her with letters of consent to conduct the study in the school, as well as for the governing body (Appendix, 4 and 5). In our discussion, she informed me that the school was a Section 14¹⁷ non-fee-paying school. The most pressing issue for the principal was the lack of school space and money. The school was very small, with very little ground space for extra-mural or play activities. Instead, the church car park was used as a playground, although this proved insufficient for the number of learners.

I indicated to the principal that I wanted to research the English and mathematics teachers. The sampling of English and mathematics teachers was a spill-over from the Treasury Project, but, in hindsight, I could have used teachers who taught any learning area. I left the choice of teachers to the discretion of the principal, and the Senior Management Team. I visited the school a week later, and at that meeting, I met the teachers who had been chosen by the management of the school. They were two English teachers and two mathematics teachers. One of the teachers indicated his reluctance to participate in the research and he was given the option to withdraw. At this meeting, I explained issues of confidentiality and ethical behaviour on my part. I also provided a detailed description of my study objectives, information on how I intended collecting the data, as well as how the research findings would be disseminated. I had initially constructed the study as an ethnographic study, but teachers were uncomfortable with my being in their classes for a whole term, and indicated that six weeks would be enough. I agreed to their requests and provided them with letters of consent (Appendix 3).

In a later discussion with the principal, she informed me that she would not allow the teacher who wanted to withdraw from the study, to do so, because the management had made the

apartheid.

¹⁷ Section 14 schools: These are public schools on private property, in this case, on the property of the Roman Catholic Church.

decision as to who should participate. She further indicated that she and her management team would discuss this with the teacher concerned. I felt very uncomfortable with this display of positional power, and indicated to the principal my preference that his withdrawal be accepted. This provided initial understanding of the complex social and professional relationships that existed in the school. I continued to feel a sense of unease, despite my inner knowledge of how difficult it was to find schools and teachers to participate. I felt that I would rather have someone willing to participate, so as not to jeopardise the study at a later stage, through non-compliance, and found the framing of the study to be precarious and open to the decisions of the participants. I indicated to the principal that the research study was contingent on my obtaining Departmental approval and that once this was obtained I would inform her and then set a possible date for me to begin the data collection.

Once permission was obtained from the Department of Education (Appendix 1), I went back to the school and informed the principal that permission to conduct research had been granted. The permission letter, as well as the ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Ethics Committee (Appendix 2) was given to the principal. Research began in the second week of the school term, and continued for six weeks. The principal informed me that all the teachers whom she had chosen would be participating in the study, and she spoke highly of the staff and the participants in particular. The teacher who initially wanted to withdraw was amazingly co-operative, and accepted my presence in his class quite easily. For the follow-up interview, he had already left Happy Ville and was teaching at a high school far out of Pietermaritzburg, but made the trip to come in to be interviewed. Whilst I observed and interviewed all four teachers, I made the decision to leave out the information from one of the mathematics teachers, who could not be interviewed a second time due to prolonged illness and absence.

Entry into the second school, Sunshine Primary¹⁸ proved much easier. The principal was extremely enthusiastic and confidently indicated that I would have no problem finding participants. Sunshine Primary is also a former DET school that accommodates black, African learners. Again, I left the choice of participants to the principal. I provided him with the necessary consent letters (Appendix 4 and 5), after intense discussion of my research plan. Upon reflection, I believe this may have tainted my research data to some extent. The

¹⁸ Pseudonym used for the second school in the study.

teachers chosen for the research were close to the principal, and very supportive of his ideas and instructions. Thus, questions relating to management may not be a true reflection of reality, but the stories of the teachers as told and lived by them, and is not reflective of a search for 'truth'. Again, four teachers agreed to participate in the study, namely, two English teachers and two mathematics teachers.

In a meeting with all the teachers, I clarified the purpose of my research, the timeframe of the study, as well as how I would be obtaining data. Teachers were given consent letters that reiterated my discussion with them (Appendix 3) Sunshine Primary was also regarded as a Quintile 3 school, but also caters to very poor learners, who live in very poor conditions. The school itself is situated in an area that signifies the contradictions within South African society, as explained previously. The school was very well-maintained, and had electricity and running water. They were supported by the wider community, and had strong ties with an international non-governmental organisation that helped them install solar heating, built up the kitchen and provided the school with two computers as well as the intercom system. The school was also in the process of building a computer/library. They continued to have international support, and their enthusiasm in participating in the research was in part because according to them they were used to being observed and helped by people from the outside. Teachers in the school also participated in a *Reading to Learn Programme*, aimed at helping learners' reading and comprehension skills.

Teachers were enthusiastic about participating, but as time proceeded, one teacher expressed fatigue at the self-awareness of her actions that my presence evoked. This must be understood against the backdrop of monitoring, regulation and accountability that is prevalent in schools (Craig & Huber, 2007). I explained that my role was to collect data about their experiences, meant for research purposes, and that it was not tied to the Department of Education's Integrated Quality Management System.¹⁹ I tried to be as unobtrusive as possible, but this observation is noted here, as it may have impacted on the findings of the research. The school had a learner population of 980, with 28 teachers, one administrative clerk, a principal and a deputy principal who were all Black African.

¹⁹ Integrated Quality Management System is the quality assurance process established in 2003, for teachers in South Africa, aimed at developing, improving and supporting teachers. It was viewed negatively by the teachers in the study who believed it was a process of regulation.

Data was collected and analysed from the following seven teachers:

Name of School	Name of teacher	Gender	Learning area	Grade
Happy Ville Primary	Evange	Male	Mathematics	7, 11
	Ngubs	Male	English	7, 6
	Joel	Male	English	5
Sunshine Primary	Ghettoh	Female	English	7
	B.V.	Female	English	5, 6
	Zippo	Female	Mathematics	7, 4
	Sthe	Male	Mathematics	6, 7

Table 1: Summary of schools and teachers selected (*names of schools and teachers have been changed to ensure anonymity).

4.5.3 Phases of data production

This section provides explanation of the research questions that underpin the study and an explanation of the narrative resources that were used to produce data. Through observation compiled in field notes, interviews and lesson observations, I was able to create deeply rich and abundant personal narratives that provided sketches of teachers personally and professionally. I explain the complexity involved in producing the data and the manner in which I negotiated this and the pragmatic decisions and insights that I made as the research process unfolded. The question that was my broad problematic and that was used to guide this data production phase was: *what are the complexities that teachers encounter when they work towards equity and social justice?*

4.5.3.1 Phase one: Teacher observation

Observation proved to be both enlightening and frustrating for me as a researcher. As previously indicated, I initially envisaged my study as ethnographic, and thus, my intention in observing was to embed myself into the life of the school. This was with the hope that I would achieve insider status. However, issues of language prevented me from being able to do this. In both the schools, the language of learning and teaching for the Foundation Phase was isiZulu, which was in accordance with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy document. The language of learning and teaching changed when learners arrived at the Intermediate Phase, and learners were then exposed to English more comprehensively. The teachers and

learners at the school were all isiZulu first language speakers.²⁰ Thus, daily interactions in the staffroom, at meetings, and during breaks were all conducted in isiZulu, which I could not understand. I am an English language speaker, and my knowledge of isiZulu is poor. I thus abandoned my intention to conduct an ethnographic study and in discussion with my supervisors, made the choice to conduct a narrative inquiry. I did, however, gain some inside perspectives of what occurred in the schools. Observation allowed me to see, hear and experience first-hand, the reality of the schools as a lived reality and as a socially constructed space. I was able to observe routines, adherence to unwritten rules and regulations in the six to eight weeks that I spent in each school.

Deciding what kind of observer I wanted to be turned out to be more of a reflective and practical endeavour than I might have imagined. This was a difficult balancing act; for I wanted to be as unobtrusive as possible, but still gain 'insider' status. For Delamont (2004), participation does not refer to real participation, but instead, to interacting with teachers and learners involved in the teaching and learning process. I thus handed out worksheets, collected books, listened to learners as they worked in pairs, which at times prevented me from being a distant observer, because learners asked me for explanations and clarification, which I gave. In such cases, my role as participant observer came to help immensely, for engaging with learners in this way helped in the generation of 'thick descriptions' (Cohen et al., 2007). I was able to gain deeper understanding of the pedagogical practices of teachers, as well as their relationships with learners, and this helped in me being able to develop relationships with both the teachers and the learners.

For the most part, I focused on observing what was going on in the classroom and the teacher in practice. Often, teachers, especially the English teachers, would ask me how to pronounce words, which in effect made it seem as though I was the 'expert'. Teachers would also ask me for the correct explanation of concepts, or to explain difficult words by offering synonyms. Teachers positioned me as someone with knowledge who they could refer to for help and prevented one teacher from being totally comfortable with being observed. However, this outsider role has much to do with the power that was associated with my

²⁰ Isi-Zulu is the indigenous language of the Black, African people of KwaZulu-Natal. Within the new curriculum isi-Zulu is promoted as the language of learning and teaching for mother tongue speakers. However, the governing body of a school makes the decision about the language policy of a school.

English social identity. For the learners, I became a part of the school quite quickly, to the extent that some learners were upset when I left without informing them personally. They insisted their teacher phone me to return to the school to say farewell to them. I returned to the school the next day, and spoke to the learners wishing them success at high school. Thus, whilst I managed to build a rapport with students, this was not so easy with some teachers, who initially took research observation as a burden.

However, my continued presence, and lack of knowledge of isiZulu, helped to alleviate the initial unease. Teachers followed the language of learning and teaching which was English and they hardly spoke isiZulu to learners when I observed them. The only time teachers used isiZulu was to scold learners, where I was not privy to the content. However, the body language and facial expression of both the teacher and the learners alluded to a negative engagement, which I pretended not to notice. Learners were sometimes embarrassed by the teacher, which led to teasing from other learners. My constant presence in the classroom was soon treated as normal, with the teachers relaxing to some extent and as time progressed, some teachers would go so far as to inflict corporal punishment in my presence.

The language barrier prevented me from fully immersing myself into the school. Whilst teachers were more than willing to give me information, not understanding the language meant I could not really relate and ask questions, or be part of conversations where English was not being spoken outside of the classroom context. This put me at a distinct disadvantage, and prevented me from being fully able to grasp and gain in-depth knowledge of the school as a whole. Cohen et al. (2007), Creswell (2008) and Niewenhuis (2008) all indicate that one of the disadvantages of observation is being marked as an outsider, and having to manage that outsider status throughout the data production phase. In discussion with my supervisors, I made the decision to focus instead only on the occurrences within the classroom and the interactions therein.

Thus, my role as observer cannot be classified strictly as participant or non-participant, but rather one that was constantly changing and dependent on the event and on what teachers wanted to reveal. I focused on looking at patterns of behaviour in order to understand the teachers' values, beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning and what this meant for equity in the classroom. Observation also focused on trying to understand teachers' pedagogy and how this helped learners gain necessary knowledge. Field notes were captured before

school started, during assembly, outside of the classroom before entering, on greeting of the teachers, and then during the lesson itself. I attempted to write everything that the teacher said in his/her explanation of lessons to learners. This was unproblematic, given that the language of learning and teaching was English, and that teachers very seldom explained concepts in isiZulu. In this way, I could understand their pedagogical practice and decision-making to a greater degree. Teachers' responses to learners' questions, types of questions asked, normative behaviour and explanations were also captured. I was able to observe the various roles or positions that teachers took up within the classroom environment.

Whilst I had written copious field notes, during the analysis phase, these proved mostly anecdotal. They helped me to observe patterns, and became a method of verification of what I had videotaped in the lessons. In some cases, I acknowledge that power differential was part of the research process. The only way in which I could negate my outsider status was in relating stories about my own teaching practice, and the feelings I had when encountering the same issues that teachers experienced, such as the difficulty in teaching English, workload issues and so on. In this way, teachers saw me as understanding of their work, and their ways of practice. I was mindful of the debt that I had to these teachers, who so openly took me into their classrooms.

4.5.3.2 Phase two: Semi-structured narrative interviews

Narrative interviews served two functions, namely that of method as well as content (Conle, 2001). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers at the two schools (See Appendix 7). The interviews were all conducted in English as all the teachers had a good command of the language and could express their ideas, beliefs and opinions quite well. The aim was to gain insight into teachers' experiences of equity and social justice in the provision of quality learning and teaching. Through the narratives I gained insight into how equity and social justice played out in situated, inequitable contexts, and how teachers negotiated their personal and professional lives. These understandings and interpretations of their world-space were often complex, nuanced and tended to involved tensions and contradictions. The use of interviews is often said to be one of the ways in which one can access such complexities (Elliot, 2005; Cohen, et al., 2007; Nieuwenhuis, 2008).

These 'ontological narratives' enabled me as researcher to understand how the teachers experienced their world, and how they would like others to understand their stories (Søreide,

2006), as well as provided the opportunity for me to probe and clarify questions related to the research focus. In this way, I was able to see how schools as institutions produced possibilities for particular narratives or stories to be told, which work towards identity construction. The spaces that teachers were able to take up and occupy were very dependent on equity and social justice discourses, which were embedded within the schooling discourse and were part of the school's desire to be responsive to the community needs. In this way, I was able to see teachers as agential beings as opposed to merely "passive organisms" (Archakis & Tzanne, 2005, p. 268). Teachers constructed their identities in complex ways in their need to provide learners with the necessary access to personal and academic success.

Interviews were impacted upon by space as well as by time. The first school did not have a proper staffroom. Thus, interviews were conducted in classrooms and often over two days and lasted between one to two hours. Given the geographical location of the school and teachers lack of transport or reliance on public transport, I was not able to conduct interviews in the afternoon. Thus, this was done in the teacher's free time, where we often used the back of a foundation phase classroom. This sometimes happened when the foundation phase teacher was teaching, and during the interview we could often hear her, but this did not impact negatively on it. Our presence in a room at the back of the classroom likewise did not interfere with teaching and learning. Initially we were viewed with curiosity by the learners, who soon forgot about us and continued with what they were doing. There were occasions when teachers requested that I interview them whilst serving relief for absent teachers. Again, this did not impact significantly on teaching, as the teacher was there to ensure that learners were busy with occupational work and to maintain order in the school.

All interviews were digitally audio-recorded. I indicated this to the teacher at the outset, in order to gain consent. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and correlated with field notes that I, as researcher, kept throughout the data collection process. Cohen et al. (2007) and Maree (2008) understand the interview process as one that is vital to interaction and knowledge production, and enables the participants to express and justify their thoughts and practices. The flexibility that is implicit in semi-structured interviews allowed me to probe, to clarify and enter into a dialogue relating to complex issues that teachers experienced in their teaching lives. In this interaction, I was able to listen, understand and be empathetic to what they experienced working in such demanding contexts (Elliot, 2005; Creswell, 2008).

Questions also related to their instructional practice and explanations of methodology. I was able to triangulate teachers' understandings with my observation of classroom practice, as well as field-notes as a means to ensure validity. However, it must be noted that I saw these encounters as features of everyday life that needed to be understood in context, rather than being points of contention. In everyday life, our practice is imbued with tension and contradictions, and whilst I attempted to be as objective as possible, "the constraints of everyday life will be a part of whatever interpersonal transaction they initiate" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 350). The interview allowed the voices of the teachers to be heard and for them to express how their experiences are produced and negotiated in their active work of everyday life (Rapley, 2004, p. 25).

I conducted a follow-up interview (Appendix 8) once I analysed the first interview and the lesson observations. The second interview focused mostly on the teachers' classroom practices, and enabled them to provide insight and justification for their pedagogical decision-making. Here they spoke of the difficulty they encountered in trying to be responsive to both the personal and academic success of learners. The second interview was conducted at their convenience, with many teachers opting to be interviewed at school. Interviews were conducted during the teachers' free time, and after school. I interviewed Zippo in her home, and Evange was interviewed in my office. He had moved to a high school and agreed to travel to Pietermaritzburg to be interviewed. This was also done after school. Interviews here also lasted between 1 to 2 hours. Whilst in grounded research, returning to the field to conduct a further interview is actually considered theoretical sampling, I used it more to allow the voice of the teacher to be heard. It was a means of clarifying their practice and a chance to co-construct their narrative by providing understanding of the reasons and mind-set in performing certain activities. This methodological strategy used in the analysis then became a means to promote social justice within the research process (Allen, 2011).

4.5.3.3 Lesson observation

Pink (2004) views the use of visual methods of data collection as reflexive and collaborative, and a way of drawing attention to "the materiality of visual images, the relationship between the image producer, the image itself and its viewer and the ambiguity of meanings" (p. 363). I observed three lessons for each teacher on days that they indicated were convenient for them. This was a necessary negotiation, because I believed that it was vital to allowing teachers to present the image they were comfortable with portraying. Field notes taken over

an extended period of time were used to verify and corroborate what was presented in the lessons. I made use of the expertise of a field worker, who had been involved in video-recording in the Treasury Project that the university undertook. At the very beginning of the data collection process, I indicated to teachers that I would be video-recording three of their lessons. Given that learners formed part of the classroom setting, I also obtained permission from learners and their parents to videotape them (Appendix 6).

I asked the field worker to capture learner interaction, mostly so as to focus on the instructional practices of the teacher and engagement with learners. Pink (2004) also provides an understanding of the vulnerability that teachers feel given that they are easily identified in the video footage. I attempted to allay feelings of vulnerability through the forging of respectful relationships with the teachers that had been built up through the research process. I also started video recording lessons in the last two weeks of field work, so as to ensure that I built a solid non-threatening relationship with them. I am not able to be sure of the extent to which this worked, but at no point did the teachers indicate that they were unhappy and did not want to be recorded.

The research assistant also made teachers feel relaxed by talking and laughing with them, and his ability to speak isiZulu proved immensely fruitful in making them feel at ease. Like Pink (2004), I too believe that it was essential to understand the subjectivities through which my research material is produced. It required that I be reflexive and aid the fieldwork relationship (Pink, 2004). I was aware, for example, of the shyness exhibited by some of the teachers, where sometimes their nervousness impacted on their ability to speak the language of teaching and learning. The use of a small handheld recorder was in keeping with teachers own experiences of video cameras, with one teacher talking about her own video camera at home that she used to record special occasions like her daughter's birthday party. This to some extent made her feel less stressed about being recorded, as she had had experience of recording in the same way.

4.6 Transforming the Data: Analytical Bricolage

This step in the research process involves presenting an account of how I made sense of the teachers' narratives in order to reveal a deeper and more profound account of teachers' practices towards equity and social justice. Analysing my data proved arduous, complex, frustrating and exhilarating. I read vast amounts of literature from different fields and

disciplines to try to make sense of the data collected. The literature often focuses on the significance and essentiality of positioning oneself into a particular methodological home (Henning, 2005) and situating data production and analysis into particular paradigms, traditions, perspectives and methods. However, my data, and the manner in which I was beginning to understand it, defied these imperatives. How was I to understand the complexity, multi-perspectival nature of teachers' practices of equity and social justice by privileging just one method? Could one method enable this?

After immersing myself in the data and in trying to be respectful of the teachers, I soon realised that privileging one method was impossible. Literature allowed me to expand my thinking, and I found that bricolage and pragmatic approaches provided me with alternative ways to understand issues of social justice and equity (Kincheloe, 2004, 2008; Frost, Nolas, Gordon, Esin, Holt, Mehdizadeh & Shinebourne, 2010). Through the use of inductive and deductive research strategies, I was able to capture this complexity, variation and diversity, reflective of my research participants as they emerged from the data (Pope, Ziebland & Mays, 2000; Seale, Gobo, Gubrium & Silverman, 2004). Through a combination of narrative inquiry and grounded analytical approaches, I was able to consider the "different layers of interpretation" which allowed for an exhaustive and diverse account by teachers of their lived experiences and realities (Frost et al., p. 2).

Burck (2005) indicates that Glaser and Strauss, the initial proponents of grounded theory, set out to devise a new way of connecting theory to data by engaging with the data, rather than through the process of deduction, which is characteristic of positivist perspectives (Lal et al., 2012). Theory was to be discovered as it plays out in reality, making theory-building more productive (Dey, 2004). Theory could be built based on the coding and emergent categories process (Nunes, Taigo Martins, Zhou, Alajamy & Al-Mamari, 2010). However, I do not make a claim to build theory, but I do make a claim to understanding the lives of the teachers who participated in my study better. In this, I used the inductive aspects of the grounded theory approach to understand teachers' practices in new and insightful ways. Their approach allowed me to understand teachers' experiences as 'grounded' in the data in order to provide a better, richer, nuanced, and more complex understanding of teachers' practices of social justice and equity (Creswell, 2008).

I was able to establish the core category at the beginning of the data analysis phase because I did have knowledge of existing literature and a background in the area of social justice that I drew upon. I only began to use the grounded theory approach during data analysis, with the hope that it would give me the necessary “analytic edge” (Charmaz, 2012, p. 3). I do not adhere strictly to the systematic prescriptive methodological procedures that Glaser, Strauss and Corbin have advocated, but instead, embrace Charmaz, (2008, p. 156) understanding that grounded theory allows “open-ended strategies” that “make method explicit” and that the “open-ended qualities foster the development of emergent conceptual analysis”. This flexibility provided me with sense-making strategies that highlight my participants’ understanding of situations, experiences and events in their context (Creswell, 2008).

Here I document the analytical process of grounded theory that was used to make sense of the copious amounts of data that were collected. I used the data analysis steps of open, axial and selective code found in the grounded approach to logically and systematically refine the vast amount of data produced. This process gave rise to conceptual categories, which were then analysed further to identify relationships between and across the data that ultimately led to the identification of core themes. I derived meaning and the ultimate identification of the themes by constantly comparing the different categories to achieve higher levels of abstraction. However, the process of analysis was guided mostly by my interaction with the data and judgements I made that would best illuminate the teachers’ thinking and reasoning of their practices towards equity and social justice (Charmaz, 2008, Creswell, 2008). I thus explain how I used the grounded theory approach to inductively refine themes to higher order abstract levels, rather than developing emerging theory.

4.6.1 Phase one: The analytical tools of open and axial coding

As already indicated, both interviews as well as the lesson observations were transcribed by researchers used by academics at the university. I was also involved in the transcription of some of the interviews and observation. Despite various software packages that are available, I found that time constraints prevented me from developing the skills required in using these. I thus made the decision to analyse the data manually. I printed out the transcribed interviews and lesson observations and read and re-read them to gain an overall feel and understanding of what each teacher was saying. In analysing, I started with the first interview and then looked at the lesson observations. Thus, with the interviews, I started coding line-by-line, using both the printed document and the electronic version. In this open coding process, I was

able to break down the data into initial categories allowed me to begin to perceive the connections within the data.

This stage of the analysis proved most time-consuming and emotionally exhausting (Glaser & Holton, 2007). As a novice researcher, I underestimated the amount of time that coding in this manner would take and this was compounded by the continuous re-evaluation of my approach. When I started coding line-by-line, I wondered if this really was a means of refining data, when the first interview of one participant yielded over 250 codes. I felt apprehensive, and my novice researcher identity felt disempowering, but I knew that I had to take ownership of this phase and analyse in a way that made sense to me and that I could explain to my supervisors. These experiences of being overwhelmed were similar to those experienced by Pandit (1996) when using the grounded theory approach. Often I felt that many of the codes were common and not valuable. Thus, I went back to the data and made the decision to code teachers' completed thoughts or segments. It did sometimes happen that in a complete thought, there was more than one code. In order to get a handle on the data, I used constant comparison, with strategies that I used to micro-analyse the data (see table below) and by asking the analytical questions: what does this code tell me, and, can I find links with this?

Table 2: Example of coding – (Evang's responses to the external expectations that surround teachers' practice)

Teaching, class in time and delivering the lessons, preparing before you go to class, giving learners adequate work, taking care of the different learning abilities. (**Teacher pedagogical/academic responsibility and role**)

And being very careful with the background of the learners because I found that with this group, there is such a difference in terms of some learners come from as far as Lesotho, the Eastern Cape, some are local some are orphans – all of these kinds of challenges (**Teacher pastoral role and responsibility/challenges**)

I feel that I am doing my best in taking care of such things and I comply with the expectations of the schools such as attending morning sessions, all the time taking responsibility without having to be called by duty, extra mural activities. (**Teachers' agency/lack?/ responsibility**)

I believe that I am allowing learners to grow as much as they can when they are in my lessons and in my presence. (**Relationship with learners**)

So ja, and I feel and also I think that I am shepherding them in the right direction to be good and effective citizens (**Shepherding metaphor/Christian value**)

From the first interview and the lesson observation I made the necessary modifications and devised the second interview schedule to explore certain concepts and ideas that emerged and needed clarification from the teachers. The reasoning behind returning to my participants for the second interview was based on my ontology and epistemology of following the actors. Ultimately, this proved useful for two reasons. Firstly, I could verify what the initial findings from the interview and lesson observation revealed with my participants, allowing them to provide justifications and reasoning behind their practice. Secondly, this process meant that I unknowingly followed the grounded theory approach, where I could make the necessary modifications after the second interview until I could see no new dimensions to teachers' explanations and that I had reached the point of saturation.

This early understanding of saturation was also useful in refining data in the later stages, when I recognised that there were no further explanations to the identified themes (Hatch, 2002; Burck, 2005). This reiterates the understanding implicit in grounded theory of data analysis as being a “recursive and iterative process... that fits well with systemic practice in which feedback informs and shapes further enquiry” (Burck, 2005, p. 244). Data from the second interview was also analysed in the same manner and through constant comparison between and across data sets I was able to find points of commonality and difference. I did not code much for themes, but did so for processes that helped me to make connections between and across my data (Charmaz, 2012).

4.6.2 Phase two: Finding the initial categories through axial coding

As I re-examined the codes using the process of axial coding, I was able to identify points of commonality and difference between and within the different data sets. In this way, I grouped together various concepts to create the initial categories. The coding system provided the analytical scaffolding that underpinned the development of the conceptual framework (See figure 1 below).

INITIAL CATEGORIES:

1. Values and Principles as Guiding Practice
2. Teacher Identity
3. Constructing learners
4. Mathematics as powerful knowledge
5. English as Powerful knowledge
6. Teacher responsibility and Accountability
7. School demands and expectations
8. Constructing parents
9. The Complexity of Social Problems/Teacher Responses
10. Teachers' complex classroom practices
11. Teachers as authority

An important strategy in the grounded theory approach is that of constant comparison, which proved useful in refining the data and analysing data inductively. Constant comparison allowed me to connect the initial categories to each other and to 'ground' the categories in the experiences of the teachers and as revealed in the data (Bradley, Curry & Devers, 2007; Creswell, 2008). Once I found these points of commonality and difference in the categories, coding became more selective, because I was now attempting to establish important core themes. Dey (2004) indicates a core theme to be a "central concept selected to act as a fulcrum around which others can be brought together into a coherent whole" (p. 85). For example, in the initial category, Teachers' Complex Classroom Practices, I asked specific questions related to the classroom practices. What are teachers able to do in the classroom? How does the context impact on what is possible to do? What are the complexities that surround teachers' ability to be responsive to curriculum demands and learner needs? And so on.

These were constant questions that I asked of the data, which allowed me to understand particular dimensions, characteristics, consequences and conditions of the different categories across the different data sets. I was also able to then map the concepts that emerged from the different categories. For example, I was able to find a link between Values and Principles as Guiding practice, and Teachers' responses to Social Problems. I was thus able to see, for example, how the values and principles that formed their personal identity provided them with a lens to make sense of how to respond to the social problems that learners encountered

daily. This positioned the context that teachers worked in and learners lived in as critical and could explain why teachers felt responsible for learners' pastoral needs as well as academic needs. The constant comparative method thus helped me to eliminate redundancy (Creswell, 2008) and allowed me to increasingly and constantly refine categories into larger themes. I continuously reverted to earlier categories and my preliminary analysis in order to evaluate the validity and authenticity of my analysis (Lal et al., 2012). The following larger themes were then developed: Understanding abject liquid contexts, The Authoring of the Self, The Allegory of Care and Responsibility and The Complexity of Classroom Practices

4.6.3 Phase three: Final identification of themes.

Data was reduced even further through constant comparison within and across these more refined themes and through selective coding. Selective coding was not done to generate the theory, but rather to refine the themes to understand the multi-dimensional nature of teachers' practices towards social justice and equity. This meant that I restricted my interpretation only to data that could be linked to the themes that I had now identified. This was the final stage of how I analysed my data. I made notes and mind-maps to be able to explain the links and connections I was making, and discussed these with colleagues and friends as a way to ensure validity and logic. The constant comparative process iterative in nature facilitated the convergence and integration of themes (Allen, 2011). I was able to collapse themes that lacked depth as stand-alone themes. This was because some themes gained more prominence, given their higher levels of abstraction, whilst others may have been submerged.

For example, in visiting and re(visiting) the data on Teachers' Identity, I began to see the complexity that surrounds teachers' personal and professional identity. Thus, I refined the themes to show the tensions, contradictions and struggles of teachers who are trying to make sense of themselves in their daily work and interactions. I concluded that as a theme, Teachers' Identity did not adequately express this intricate dimension to teacher identity. I began to see this more in relation to how teachers author their identities that show the multiple layers to identity work, more than just knowing about teacher identity. I found that in trying to understand how teachers author themselves, there were influences that impacted upon the formation and re(formation) of identity, which was crucial in this context. The "abject liquid" spaces (Zipin, et al., 2012, p. 185) that were indicative of context underpinned teachers' thoughts, actions and practices, and this became a theme that was crucial to all the other themes. I could no longer explain it as a stand-alone theme.

What was also significant was that, through the process of mind-mapping and questioning, I was able to weave the narrative thread of teachers' stories taking into account temporality, sociality and spatiality (Clandinin, Pushor & Orr, 2007; Clandinin & Huber, 2010). Charmaz (1999, p. 378) indicates that one of the issues or problematic areas within the grounded theories approach is that the focus on analytic clarity can actually "mute mood and flatten meaning", and thus, building in the narrative thread in this proved vital if I was to allow the teachers' experiences to emerge and to capture and 'recapture the lived experiences' of teachers and understand their stories better. This process gave rise to the final three themes. **The Authoring of the Self** was the first theme and herein I was able to delve into the identity discourses and positioning that were embedded in the narratives of the teachers, where the merging of the personal and the professional could be observed.

In perusing the table (See Conceptual Table 3 below), I was able to see the logic and ordering and understand the flow from one sub-theme to the next. I could also see how the concepts that I used made sense to each theme and sub-theme. This kind of logical practice is critical for tracking, and providing explanations for modifications to themes, I ensured that the voices of the teachers were able to emerge, and thus, was able to authenticate and increase the validity and reliability of the analytical process (Cherubini, Kitchen, Goldblatt & Smith, 2011). This is explained in Chapter 5. The research questions that emerged after engaging in analysis were:

- How do teachers negotiate their identity in their everyday practices of social justice and equity?

I found that when teachers negotiated their teaching contexts in order to be responsive to their learners' needs, they took up various roles or subject positions, and thus a sub-question with a sub-component became a necessity to understanding how and why they did this:

- What positions do teachers take up in their practices of social justice and equity and why do they take these positions up?

In Chapter Six I continued to analyse the way in which teachers constantly negotiate and re-negotiate who they were in contexts that were mired in marginalisation and alienation, where teachers' identity illuminated the fragmented, uncertain and conflicting nature of their practice. However, I extrapolated this further, where, whilst it deals with identity, the complexity that surrounds the practice is exemplified. Thus, the second theme, **The Allegory**

of Responsibility and Care, was positioned as crucial to teachers' responses to learners' academic and pastoral needs. In this, I found that who the teachers indicated they were and why they felt the incentive to help learners was embedded in historical, contextual, social, political and emotional factors. These had particular influences on how teachers (re)formed their identity in order to respond pragmatically to learner needs. Teachers' narratives reflect a variety of discourse genres that they used to describe their identities and the associated ideologies, values and beliefs. These ideologies, beliefs and values were used as resources to forge an identity that made sense to them. However, in their need to meet learners' needs, teachers' emotions and feeling of powerlessness, hopelessness and uncertainty, undermine what they believe was possible to do, impacting quite heavily on their ability to be responsible and caring. The research question that emerged and guided the writing phase was:

- What are the struggles, tensions and contradictions that surround teachers' practice of care and responsibility?

Chapter Seven, then focuses on the final theme, **Re-imagining Teachers' Pedagogical Practices**, and the attempts by teachers to provide learners with access to quality education as social justice and equity imperatives. There were significant facets that detailed the personal, social and professional processes involved in teachers' practices. The research questions that were eventually clarified and consolidated focused specifically on their pedagogical practices of social justice and equity:

- What are teachers' pedagogical practices of social justice and equity in the classroom?

This question, however, needed to be expanded to include the contradictions and tensions that were seemingly embedded in practice. Thus the following sub-question proved crucial:

- How do teachers negotiate various contextual factors and tensions evident in their classroom practice?

4.7 The Role of Literature and its Application to the Evolving Conceptual Framework

As stated previously, my research study was never originally conceptualised as a study that would make use of grounded theory. However, I soon discovered that the theoretical literature that I had engaged with at the beginning of my study did not provide me with the means to understand my initial forays into data analysis, and was thus discarded. However, I read extensively around issues of equity and social justice and interview questions, field

observations and lesson observation all sought to understand teachers' practices of equity and social justice. This knowledge and insight formed the contextual knowledge in the field of equity and social justice, and meant that I could already establish the core theme of teachers' practices of equity and social justice.

However, in working with the data, I concentrated on identifying the codes in an emergent way from the data leading to the identification of the various themes. After identifying the themes, I paused to assess the theoretical links to equity and social justice. In discussions with my supervisors, I was then advised to use the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data, and thereafter, to locate empirical studies across various disciplines that used these themes. This advice proved crucial, and found validity in the current trend to move away from "overall grand theories" and to move towards the various "explanatory approaches for detailed problems" (Canagarajah, 2006; Flick, 2009, p. 49).

Literature informing the study came from different disciplines including health, economics, leadership and the social sciences, in order to gain clarity on the teachers' perspectives evident in the various themes. In order to justify and authenticate the use of concepts, I foregrounded the question of how these concepts explained or "earn[ed] their way into your narrative", asking if there might be better ways or concepts to be found that could better explain the data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 166). These analytical questions provided a way of constantly comparing data with the existing literature in order to provide validity to my research. Whilst the concepts became a necessary tool to explain the data, they did not detract from the centrality of the data, which were the building blocks of explanation, with the aim of identifying the study's contribution to new knowledge within the broader educational context. Charmaz (2012, p.4) indicates that comparing themes with existing literature has not received much attention from researchers using grounded theory approaches, to which this study makes a novel contribution. Berman (2013) also highlighted the lack of research and literature that can help novice researchers to justify the use of a conceptual framework in a doctoral study. It was necessary to show how these concepts are "lived and understood" (Charmaz, 2006, p.166) in my data, and crucial not to force them into the data. These analytical strategies aim at a reflective and respectful response to the inherent complexity of how society is organised, the complexity that surrounds the teachers' actions and the need to represent these complex actions in "principled" ways important to research approaches (Atkinson & Delamont, 2008, p. 304).

I used both general and specific concepts that were found to be appropriate, to explain the data, often moving between the two. In this way, concepts became a vehicle of constant comparisons across the data. The finely grained concepts explained nuances across themes, and this could not form an organised set of data explanation. However, I could make logical, coherent connections between the data, which was empirically grounded, and the concepts in use. These concepts formed the building blocks or scaffolding to greater reflective conceptualisation and interpretation of data (Berman, 2013). This kind of conceptual thinking allowed me to see the connections and relationships that, according to Berman (2013), are reflective of superior thinking crucial to doctoral study. This was initially disconcerting, as I felt the need to be more systematic, and this was compounded by the lack of research that provided an understanding of this kind of data analysis. This was ameliorated to some extent, where concepts gained from empirical studies enabled an “enhanced sensitivity to subtle nuances in data” (Flick, 2009, p. 51). I used the literature and the concepts that emerged from the various empirical studies to reflect back to my own data, so as to detail the different ways in which the teachers practised, with the understanding that this would provide a more complex, nuanced understanding. Thus, the concepts both the general and the specific were used in a synergy of reflection that moved in tandem, both reflecting and revealing new ways to think and understand.

Concepts gained from empirical data and literature allowed me to probe, disentangle and capture how they could be used and understood, and these allowed multiple entry points into explanations of what teachers were doing. I could then understand the data from different angles and perspectives, and thus built on ideas about the complexity that surrounds teachers’ practices. This meant that my analysis stretched in different directions, which provided a greater appreciation of what was being revealed. In this way, simplistic, narrowed and limiting understandings of what was occurring in the teaching and learning lives of my participants was avoided. For example in the theme or category of **The Allegory of Responsibility and Care** I read literature that dealt with care as a concept. In this, I examined quite closely how care as a sociological concept was understood and practised in subtle ways. I could explore teacher’s argumentations around caring that produced different understandings than what was revealed by various studies. This enabled alternative explanations to emerge. Similarly, nuances emerged in contradictory arguments from data around social realist theory on powerful knowledge juxtaposed against the social justice

theory and understanding of culturally relevant knowledge. This led to a more holistic understanding of how knowledge can be understood in the South African context.

My initial reading and understanding of social justice and equity helped to locate and narrow the scope of the literature that I reviewed. Moreover, literature revealed the necessity of locating these concepts, as they are practised by teachers in their various contexts. I needed to use the concepts, both general and specific, to explain how the teachers in a specific context negotiated the schooling context and wider norms and discourses, so as to find pragmatic ways of responding to learners. This method of using literature was significant, in that I was able to ensure that specifics were not lost, and this helped me to weave a coherent story that was truly reflective of teachers' work. Reading across various disciplines and fields, I was also able to understand how these various concepts were used and applied in various ways in respective research. I was able to compare how concepts are used and could apply them as various entry points for the purposes of revealing the intricacies of teachers' thoughts, practices, values and beliefs. I could then locate my study across various fields, for example, in education, but also within policy and the field of social and emotional wellbeing.

Thus, my analysis was grounded in literature and concepts that allowed me to understand teachers' work, as opposed to being shaped and moulded by and explained only through a theoretical lens. In the data analysis chapters, many theoretical and conceptual terms emerged. I have chosen to highlight the proliferation of general and specific concepts that emerged from literature on empirical studies and that were used to analyse the data. Whilst the concepts used were evident across all chapters, I have chosen to highlight them only once in the analysis chapters.

This does not detract from a limitation that exists in working without firm theory, especially for a novice researcher like myself, where a danger exists that one "may end up seeing nothing or become overwhelmed at seeing everything" (Hatch, 2002, p. 40). Although not all of it was relevant, I found that engagement across a diverse literature gave me a deeper insight into many of the concepts and themes that arose, and raised the analytical level of my analysis (Charmaz, 2012, p. 4). I believe that whilst my analysis is not grounded or embedded within an established theoretical framework, it is I hope grounded in sound analytical research strategies, epistemological orientations and conceptual conclusions that I explain as part of the study (see table below for conceptual framework) (Leshem & Trafford, 2007).

Table 3: Conceptual Framework

Research Problematic: What are the complexities that teachers encounter when they work towards equity and social justice?

Chapter 5: The Authoring of the Self

Central Research Question: How do teachers' negotiate their identities within their everyday practices of social justice and equity?			
Research Questions	Sub-theme		Concepts Identified
How do teachers negotiate their identity within their everyday practices of social justice and equity?	Historical and personal Influences on professional identity construction	Historical influences	historical biographies, process of becoming, narrative resources, internal identity, external identity, moral purpose, resilience, orienting tools, culturally based meaning, status, power, influence of cultural, historical and political context, tensions, limitations, possibilities, cultural norms and constraints, trials, biographical resources, moral endeavour, visioning, culturally relevant caring, culturally relevant critical teacher caring, marginalisation, construction, trials, identity props, resources, disempowered, personal dispositions, embodied practice, contours, habitus
	Internal Identity	Relation to self	relation to self, personal or internal identity, moral resources, responsive and supportive of learners, reflexivity and self- scrutiny self-knowledge, agency, human rights discourses, co-constructors, professional landscape, humanist and vocational values, self-authoring, personal investment, taken- for- granted discourses (love, care, dedication and self -investment), internalised prescription, investment
	Religious identity	Influence of religion	contours, ontological narratives, habitus, durable dispositions, organising principles of action, institutional habitus, cultural continuity,
		Institutional religious construction of identity	institutional identity, regulated and constructed, discursive authority, institutional resources, artefacts, identity props, external identity of action, mediating influence, positioning, ethical fidelity, re-orientating, providers of love and care, learners as passive and dependent, religious discourse around love, socially accepted

			mechanism/habitus, institutional habitus, routinized embodied practice, discursive authority, positioning, structurally determining
		Historical influence of Christianity	Christianity as Identity regulation discourse, stewardship, pragmatic orientation, self-knowledge
		The tension surrounding Christianity and corporal punishment	dilemmatic positioning, power as political and ethical, identity trials, in loco parentis, mental and cognitive structures or dispositions, corporal punishment, critical capacity, democratic legislation, re-positioning and re-negotiation, game of truth, stewards and shepherds, normalising corporal punishment, internal religious identity of thought, belief, ideology vs. external identity of action, enduring cultural conditioning, good enough compromise, fragile persona, resist contextual positioning, hierarchical power relations, multiple identities, pastoral power
What positions do teachers take up in their practice of social justice and equity and why do they take up these positions?		The sovereignty of Christianity	identity regulation devices, lack agency, personal and professional identities in contradiction, accepted social values and norms, dominant identities
	Democratic identity	Developing a democratic identity	affinity identity, common humanity, humanist understanding of caring, culturally responsive manner, historical external force of apartheid and oppression, structural inequality, ought self, disequilibrium
	Influence of context		well-being, shared stock of narrative resources, selfless caring, high levels of care
	Positioning	Multiple roles: the caring teacher	caring as relational, ethic of critical care, ethic of responsibility, high quality relationships both personal and academic, hard caring, supportive instrumental relationships and high academic expectations, hope and action, responsive to learner needs, influence of cultural norms, engrossment, relationship with the other, face to face encounter, ethical response to the call of the other, infinite caring, no reciprocal expectations, otherness of the other, divided

			self, held hostage – own embodied self, respond to call of the other
		The all-rounder teacher	roles and responsibility, personal and professional identity, reinforcing and reflecting societal norms, position teachers, ethical decision making, being aware, role of counsellor, friend, father figure, parent, family, collective responsibility for learners – feeling of vulnerability, relate responsibly to learners, idealised description
		The supportive teacher	material conditions, emotional dimension of caring as embodied practice, financial and emotional supporter, stewardship, Christianity as orienting compass. connectedness, internalised belief, saviour, infinite call of the other, passive encounter
		The moral agent	role of socialisation and inculcation of moral values, socially constructed subjective inclinations, authoritative custodian of moral values and virtues, culturally bounded, confusion –lack of role criteria, fragmented unstable identity, moulding, identity in a constant state of becoming, institutional identity vs personal identity, position of authority, assigned social identity, dilemma, alienation from self

Chapter 6: The Allegory of Responsibility and Care

Central Research Question: What are struggles, tensions and contradictions that surround teachers' practices of care and responsibility?			
Sub-Research Questions	Sub-theme		Concepts Identified
	The uncertainty of the ethic of responsibility		compounded disadvantaged, ethic of responsibility and care is constraining and responsive, discursive resource, ethico-political dimension, agency, morality and intentionality, process of becoming within relationships, ethico-political dimension, resilience, motivation obligation and responsibility, complexified education vision, social and educational disadvantage, performance inequality, imagined futures, uncertainty, disconnect, nurturance pedagogies, motivational props and tools
	The emotions surrounding identity negotiation		emotionality, pedagogical care and responsibility, subjectivity, emotional labour, hard caring, norm of caring, vision of excellence, responsibility and caring intertwined, teachers as selfless and self-sacrificing, moral visioning,
		Dilemmas surrounding caring	disequilibrium, uncertainty, responsibility, contradictions in the face to face encounter, ethical reasoning and behaviour is ambiguous, face to face encounter, servant, endless responsibility, 'other' Other, ethical accountability, disjuncture between personal values and accountability, reciprocity, vulnerability, helplessness and inefficacy, internal sense of responsibility, struggle for recognition, moral appreciation,
	Teachers' responsibility to learners	Teachers as knowledge providers and saviours	knowledge providers/saviours, engagements with educational goals and priorities, construction of learners as passive
		The difficulty in accessing moral rewards	moral rewards, unlimited resources, internal to teaching, commitment, responsibility and passion, demoralisation,

			burnout, self-recrimination, self-blame, , unhappiness, discontent and frustration, active and reflective dimensions of identity, resilient, draw on personal reserves, structural and cultural constraints, depoliticised, continued hope, personal dispositions, values, emotional disorientation, responsibility not effortless/natural, critical care, psychic rewards, individualism, emotional sustenance, individual schizophrenia of values and purpose, ontological dilemmas, presentism, addictive presentism, just-in-time, emotional work, emotional agency
		Struggle to find a niche	internal disquiet, moral rewards of teaching, sense of responsibility, externally imposed demands, discursive resources, democratic discourse, Christian discourse, lack of belonging, internal space, external constraints and impositions
		Accessing moral rewards	external demands, relational space, motivational prop, disequilibrium, uncertainty, commitment to learners as discursive resource, intrinsic moral dimension, personal and professional identities in conflict and disarray, full humanity, moral distancing, interdependent relationship, exchange relationship, reciprocity, blame and shame, accountability as manifold, systemic and social barriers, radical change expectations, acceptable institutional subjectivity, moral indifference, non- material rewards of teaching, lack of recognition, demoralisation
		Lack of agency with regard to work	demoralisation, professional agency, lack of agency, external accountability demands, moral rewards, exteriorisation

Chapter 7: Re-imagining Teachers' Pedagogical Practices

Central Research Question: What are teachers' pedagogical practices of social justice and equity in the classroom?			
Sub-Research Questions	Sub-theme		Concepts Identified
What are teachers' pedagogical practices of equity and social justice in the classroom? How do teachers negotiate contextual factors and tensions evident in classroom practice?	Influences:	Historical influences	histories of their persons, power, non-material social goods, linguistic and social power, affective emotional bonds, mis-recognition, imagined benefits, social perceptions, place shapes, personal and professional performance and dispositions, social and ideological repertoires
		Establishing subject identities	failure cycle, social and cultural complexity, inherited talents, power of mathematics, dis-location, imagined community, social and intellectual benefits, materiality of environment, investment, symbolic and material resources, third space, school as sole site of knowledge acquisition, investment, powerful knowledge structures, desire and commodity, invisible symbolic power, read the word, read the world, cultural dissonance
	Equitable/Socially Just Practices	Understanding knowledge	classification, culturally relevant, powerful knowledge structures, learners as assets, induct, legitimate school knowledge, relevance vs rigor, traditional pedagogy, connected knowledge, multiple representations, temporal portability, cumulative learning, accountability, pedagogic discourse, external language of description, everyday knowledge, learners as assets, rigorous teaching and learning, discipline related vocabulary and concepts,
		Tensions and contradictions	life-world knowledge/community knowledge vs specialised knowledge, horizontal discourse, funds of knowledge, critically engage and transform society, traditional pedagogy, official or vertical knowledge, glamourizing individual meaning making, co-construct, scaffolding/sequencing, distributive rules, code class, re-

			contextualisation, horizontal knowledge, distributive rules, student as knower, rules of the game, recognition and realisation rules, explicit evaluation criteria, selection, uncertainty, disequilibrium, disconnection, stewardship, Christian identity, re-inhabit (place),
	Impediments to Equity, Social Justice	Negative aspects related to access: Lack of specialised knowledge Low cognitive demand External regulation	organisational assets, specialised knowledge, substantive conversation, cognitive shifts, doers of knowledge, selection, sequencing, pacing, fragmented knowledge, student engagement, critical thinking, passive learners, chorusing, chanting, active participation myth, low cognitive demand, cognitive and knowledge complexity, disengaged instruction, framing, internal framing, restricted curricular diets, external framing, pacing, lack of student engagement, rate of transmission, pacing, strong internalised forms of control external accountability
		Positive Aspects related to Access: Individualising learning Pedagogy Explicit connections and multiple representation Compassionate rationality Claiming agency and authority	survance, survival, resistance, pedagogy of poverty, differentiated support, individualising, isolating, compassionate rationality, procedural rules, esoteric knowledge, institutional disadvantage, co-constructors of knowledge, scaffolding, critical thinking questioning, intra-discursive, inter-discursive, student-teacher relationship, authority, agency, explicit connections, multiple representations, connected knowing, learning and knowledge building, socially valued knowledge, enhancement, identity formation, situations for validation, temporal portability, institutional disadvantage, situations for validation, co-construct, enhancement, social and mathematical identities

4.8 Deductive Data Analysis

The classroom data was analysed deductively. Bernstein's analytical framework was used to understand the pedagogical practices of the teacher using his concepts of classification and framing. Three lessons were observed for each of the teachers. In total, 21 lessons were video-recorded and then transcribed. I viewed the lessons myself, not only to verify the transcriptions, but also as a way to get closer to the data. In this way, visual data became textual data, but I went back constantly to the visual data for clarification purposes. Analysing the classroom observation proved complex, as I needed to identify the classification concept or the 'what' and the 'who' were involved in the pedagogic relationship. There is a rich source of knowledge emanating from those involved in understanding Bernstein's work in South Africa. Reading the work of Bernstein, I was able to use the external language of description to understand teachers' and learners' practices.

Bernstein's three classification relationships were identified, namely that of inter-disciplinary; intra-disciplinary and inter-discursive relationships. Classification refers to how strongly bounded the subject areas are. These relationships were analysed according to their relative strength and weakness and were denoted by C++; C+; C-. Inter-disciplinary classification detailed how teachers positioned their subject area. In this way, I could understand if teachers used conceptual knowledge from other learning areas as a means of access, or whether these learning areas were strongly bounded, where the learning area was regarded as a specialised knowledge form. Intra-disciplinary classification attempts to explore the extent to which the teachers used conceptual knowledge from within the learning subject as a means to enable and aid conceptual knowledge within the learning area itself. Inter-discursive classification provides an understanding of teachers' attempts to link official school knowledge with that of everyday cultural knowledge. I could then use teachers' understandings gained from the second interview to understand how teachers understood their learning area and the knowledge in it. Thus, Bernstein's concept of classification allowed me to deductively understand how knowledge was positioned and controlled and if this provided learners with access to legitimated knowledge within educational discourse.

Framing describes the control that the teachers and the learners have over the selection, sequencing, pacing and evaluation of the lesson, or the 'how' of pedagogy. It also provides an understanding of the control relations between the teacher and the learners. I was able, for example, to gain an understanding of who was the legitimate knowledge provider in the

classroom. Here also, the relative strength and weakness of teacher and learner control of the learning process was denoted by F++; F+; F-; F--. Those lessons that could not be coded because the lesson did not have any significant knowledge or where there was no evidence of control I chose to add in a question mark. All lessons that were analysed were 60 minutes in duration. I divided the lessons into three episodes depicting a shift in teaching method and content, thus I coded how the teacher introduced the lesson, then the middle of the lesson and lastly how the lesson was concluded.

These were then reduced further, through depicting only the lessons, the episodes and concepts of classification and framing using only codes of C++; C+; C-; F++; F+; F-; F--. This manner of refining the data allowed me to finally settle on one code that gave an indication of teachers' pedagogical practices and could also allow for an understanding of how learners are positioned in the teaching and learning process. This provided an initial framework to understand teachers' pedagogical decision-making and practice and the manner in which their practices provide equitable and socially just outcomes for learners (See Table 4 below on Bernstein's framework).

Table 4: Bernstein's Analytical Framework

Criteria	Evange			Sthe			Zippo			Ngubs			Joel			B.V.			Ghettoh		
Episode	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Everyday/Specialised	C++	C++	C++	?	C+	C+	C++	C++	C++	C+	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C-	C+	C++
Intra-discursive	C++	C+	C++	C++	C++	C++	C+	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	?	C++	C(m)	C++	C++	C-	C+	C+
Inter-discursive	C++	C+	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	?	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++
Selection	F+	F++	F++	F++	F++	F++	F++	F++	F+	F++	F++	F++	F++	?	F-	F++	F++	F++	F++	F++	F++
Sequencing	F+	F+	F+	F++	F++	F-	F++	F++	F++	F++	F+	F++	F++	?	?	F++	F++	F++	F++	F++	F++
Pacing	F-	F(m)	F-	F(m)	F(m)	F-	F++	F-	F-	F++	F+	F++	F++	F-	F-	F++	F++	F++	?	?	F++
Evaluation	F-	F+	F-	F(m)	F++	F(m)	F++	F+	F-	F++	F+	?	F++	F-	F-	F++	F++	F++	F++	F++	F++

Criteria	Evange	Sthe	Zippo	Nugbs	Joel	B.V.	Ghettoh
Everyday/Specialised	C++	C+	C++	C++	C++	C++	C+
Intra-discursive	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C+
Inter-discursive	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++
Selection	F++	F++	F++	F++	C	F++	F++
Sequencing	F+	F++	F++	F++	?	F++	F++
Pacing	F-	F(m)	F-	F++	F-	F++	?
Evaluation	F-	F(m)	F+	F+	F-	F++	F++

Whilst Bernstein informed an understanding of teachers' pedagogical practice and the extent to which learners were being exposed to quality education, he did not prove useful in understanding *why* teachers practised the way they did, or the complexity that surrounded their practices. It was necessary for me to understand the 'why' of teachers' practice. Working within an interpretive paradigm, I was able to understand knowledge production and transformation as cyclical and iterative, rather than linear and cumulative (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Nunes et al., 2010; Early & Norton, 2014). I thus used the knowledge that I gained from the lesson observations with regard to teachers' pedagogical practice to form the basis for questions that needed to be raised in the second interview. This was done so as to generate new ways of understanding teachers' practices. The second interview was then analysed inductively using the grounded approach. Not only did this allow me to gain greater insight into teachers' practices, but it was also a form of triangulation, as lesson observation data was verified by participants themselves. Teachers provided an understanding of, for example, issues of pacing and why they paced lessons in particular ways. In this way, data and emerging themes or categories were given credibility and was able to be classified as trustworthy data. In using Bernstein's concept of classification, for example, I was able to gather a picture of disciplinary knowledge as a form of access to meaningful knowledge.

At this point, I turn to the ethical considerations that underpin my study in the search for authenticity, analytical and intellectual rigour and issues of credibility.

4.9 Ethical Consideration: Steering through the profusion of quality appraisal criteria

Schwandt (2000) and Henning (2005) indicate that there is considerable debate regarding assessing the integrity and quality that surrounds qualitative research, pertaining to reliability, validity and generalisability. Researchers argue that these three central aspects are not possible within qualitative research (Schwandt, 2000; Golafshani, 2003; Henning, 2005; Nobel & Smith, 2015). Instead, Noble and Smith (2015, p.1) argue for the use of 'truth value', 'consistency', 'neutrality' and applicability, detailing nine strategies to be used to establish this. Others like Golafshani (2003) and Elliot (2005) indicate that ethical claims about research should adhere to notions of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability and dependability. Henning (2005) argues for good craftsmanship, and honest communication and action as crucial criteria to evaluate qualitative research.

Within the narrative tradition, Polkinghorne (2007) calls for explication of the manner in which participants' experiences are presented in the analysis emphasising the essentiality of transparency. The search for 'truth' then is the search for 'narrative truth' and not 'historical truths' (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 479). There is however a broad consensus that qualitative research must be able to show that their studies are credible (Creswell & Miller, 2000). However, making decisions about what criteria to use to assess the quality of the study given such variation, is further complicated through the use of combined methodological traditions used in this study. Instead, I have chosen to use criteria that can be used across qualitative traditions, which proves most meaningful here. I now discuss the rationale for the methodological bricolage used to ensure rigour and quality.

4.9.1 Combining narrative inquiry and grounded theory approaches: An emerging trend

Given the current 'crisis of representation', I made the decision to use bricolage as an interpretive tool, believing that this would provide me with the necessary 'interpretative authority' (Josselson, 2007, p. 548) to "paint a picture of reality" (Boltanski, 2011, p. 4). For Boltanski (2011), this picture must include the radical uncertainty that invades the world and which eludes complete description. My attempts at using both narrative and grounded theory approaches was to understand the way in which teachers held 'reality together' as critical thoughtful people given the fragility and uncertainty of reality. Lal et al. (2012) provided twelve methodological characteristics that researchers should think about when combining or using this methodological bricolage. These range from historical development and methodological purpose, theoretical perspectives; paradigmatic considerations, research relationships, sampling, data collection and analysis, through to representation of findings, to ensure some sort of commensurability or collaboration between the two.

Combining methods provided me with the means to fully capture the world of the teachers. Through these two approaches, I could, firstly, through narrative inquiry, elicit the stories from teachers, and then represent their stories as lived and told. Through the grounded theory approach I was able to use analytical strategies that allowed these stories to be revealed as they emerged from the data. Both the approaches call for multiple data sources as a means to understand teachers' lives. Creswell and Miller (2000) and Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) refer to this as triangulation, a validating tool to corroborate data from multiple sources of information, as well as procedures to establishing the various themes or categories. In using various narrative resources of field notes, observation, interviews and lesson

observations, I was able to understand my data in multiple ways that represented multiple views or ways of being from the teachers. The field notes, for example, were used to corroborate the lesson observations and the two interviews corroborated the field notes and observations. Corroborating evidence in this way allowed for a richer rendering of teachers' practices of equity and social justice. This thick, rich description allowed me to weave a narrative account of teachers' experiences specifying the tensions and contradictions of negotiating their everyday professional and personal lives, and allowed for authenticity and quality to be maintained (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Whilst acknowledging that both involve different analytical procedures, I used a grounded theory approach to arrive at the themes with concepts gained from literature to understand the storyline. Narrative inquiry methodology influenced my data collection and representation of findings, whilst the grounded approach influenced the data analysis and the representation of findings. Lal et al. (2012) indicate that using this combined methodology can offset the limitations associated with each approach. I therefore used the approach to ensure rigour and analytical honesty in arriving at themes, and used narratives to ensure that the stories of the teachers were told and the voices not lost. These have been explained in the analysis section of this chapter.

Whilst there are cautionary tales of combining methods, the politics of my study demanded this. I, therefore, read extensively in order to understand the analytical strategies of grounded theory and narrative inquiry. In order to show quality and credibility in the study, I also located it within both interpretivist and critical paradigms. This meant that in following the actors as proposed, data revealed that participants' accounts of their practices are pluralistic and interpretive. Participants used particular world views to understand their teaching and learning lives, and their understandings were also contextualised. In this way, I was sensitive to both place and events as they were detailed. As discussed in relation to Bourdieu (1990) and Boltanski (2011), as well as in this chapter, the voices of the participants are to be emphasised. Throughout the study, I positioned the teachers as agential and able to critically understand their social, historical, economic and political space and what this means for their practice. In the sections below, I situate important characteristics located within both these approaches.

4.9.2 The importance of dialogic retrospection: The voice of the actor

My study is located within both interpretivist and critical paradigms. I initially started off the data production phase with critical theory as a theoretical lens to view the subjects, events and practices. In this phase, teachers' practices and social identities were viewed with the aim of uncovering how these were used to disempower or empower learners and prevent access to quality learning. On my supervisor's encouragement, I began a process of "dialogic retrospection" to be able to hear the teacher's voices as distinctly as possible (Allen, 2011, p. 38). This became necessary for the purposes of accountability, where I recognised the importance of being fair to the teachers who had taken me into their personal spaces for a prolonged time. Further, findings needed to be corroborated with the teachers in order to open up and facilitate an exchange of ideas with the teachers whom I came to view as partners in the research process.

Thus, the second interview was meant to ensure that I had not used my own interpretation of their action, but instead, asked them to provide insight into explanations of their practice. Despite attempts to be reflective, collaborative and to establish parity in the research relationship, to deny the presence of power imbalances would be dishonest and naïve. As indicated already, teachers did feel uncomfortable by my presence, with some teachers positioning me as the 'expert' given my language proficiency. Thus, whilst I made attempts to eradicate this, I must acknowledge the language differentials that existed. This is also true of the power that rests with me in writing the narratives of the teachers on their behalf (Allen, 2011).

I kept in mind the aims of the research, which were to present an account of the complexity and difficulty that teachers dealt with daily. I also aimed to present an account of teachers who were trying hard to empower learners in the classroom. I reflected on my own teaching career and recognised that the contexts, the history and socio-economic factors that teachers faced were vastly different from mine and thus the need to be empathetic, sensitive and respectful of teachers was crucial in my study. Echoing Allen (2011, p. 39), this research attempted to "attach lives to social structures and construct stories and analyses that interrupt" current educational discourse, which creates good/bad binaries without recognising teachers' attempts to make a difference.

Thus, I see this research in its focus on recognition of teachers' effort as a form of social practice, emphasising the political implications and integrated into the methodological aims. These narrative understandings were crucial, because I understood teachers' lives as multiple and varied with constantly evolving worldviews. This afforded the opportunity to explain the various roles or identities that explained and accentuated the complexity of teachers' work. This was consistent with Boltanski (2011), who sought to understand the fragility of teachers' reality and the plural inconsistencies of practices. This reflexivity and dialogical relationship was also my attempt to counter claim that, in the grounded approach, "researcher-participants relationships are only important in relation to the outcomes of data collection" (Lal et al., 2012, p. 9). Despite attempts by Charmaz's (2005), constructivist grounded approach to include reflexivity and relationship-building in the research process, this, according to Lal et al. (2012) continues to be a neglected area within the grounded approach.

4.9.3 Doing no harm

Elliot (2005) argues that any research that focuses on understanding human beings must be considerate of the possible repercussions this may have on those participants. This is because, as a researcher, I endeavoured to obtain 'data' from a space that was genuine, empathetic and respectful of participants who were willing to share significant and meaningful aspects of their lives (Josselson, 2007, p. 539). Thus, I was mindful of the possible harm that my research may bring to the participants. The ethical concerns woven throughout this chapter are concerned with issues of power, given that, as researchers, we are "confronted with ethical issues at every step of the research" (Flick, 2009, p. 41). This personal and moral relationship that I had entered into with teachers solidified the relationship based on consent, anonymity and confidentiality. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured through the use of pseudonyms coined by the participants themselves.

Hatch (2002) indicates that in relation to people who are regarded as experts in the field of education, teachers assume a subordinate position, often believing that they are not learned enough. In this relationship, they give up their positions of power. However, I was aware of this dynamic, and attempted to be sensitive to teachers' feeling of insecurity and vulnerability that sharing experiences entail. I made efforts to listen respectfully to them, and most importantly, hear the stories of the teachers through dialogical interaction. Establishing relationships of trust, free from fear meant that I also needed to also put myself out there on a personal level. This ethic of care (Noddings, 1990, 2005) established relationships of mutual

emotional reciprocity. This I did by relating personal experiences of teaching in order for teachers to discuss personal issues related to their professional space. In this way, teachers were able to express emotions of joy, happiness, nostalgia, frustration and unhappiness that formed part of the emotional labour of teaching. I was careful not to express judgement but instead listened, asked questions for clarification and expressed empathy for their experiences. I hoped this balanced unequal power relationships and gave me insider status and opened up the dialogical space. Another consideration that became critical related to the manner in which I represented the narratives of teachers. I represent the stories of teachers, who historically belong to and work in marginalised communities. In representing the “other”, it was necessary for me to be cognisant that I do not represent otherness, and to stories of victimhood (Burck, 2005, Allen, 2011). For this reason, I went back into the field to present my initial findings to teachers and for them to confirm, deny, explain and clarify their practices that reflected their point of view.

4.9.4 Being analytically honest

I also tried to be ‘analytically honest’ (Miles et al., 2014) in explaining how the data ‘came together’, through the use of strategies inherent in the grounded theory and narrative inquiry approach, which were explained in-depth. This turn to interpretive authentication required that I explain the analytical process that guided this researcher. The process of open, axial and selective coding was used to show the reader the arrival of themes of those categories emerging from the data. Constant comparison enabled higher levels of abstraction that came to signify the complexity that surrounds the work of teachers. It also allowed me to narratively inquire into teachers’ practices, as opposed to retelling and reliving these (Clandinin, Pushor & Orr, 2007). Herein, I focused on the ‘how’ of analysis; in other words, the manner in which the themes eventuated that detailed the nuances, contradictors and tensions of teachers’ practices and voices as multiple and varied. This has been explained as well as how the conceptual framework was developed, based on my engagement with literature. The concepts were used in a manner that allowed thick rich descriptions cognisant of temporality, sociality and place. Coherence was maintained through the linking and connections with the research questions as well as the findings. However, to include honesty is to also recognise the power that is within the positioning of the researcher, for I assigned codes to the data. I also constructed the categories and made decisions with regard to the concepts that could illuminate what was revealed. My explanations above provide details of the steps I have taken to validate or prove the worthiness of the claims that I have made to the

knowledge that was produced. These analytical steps I hope lend credence that I moved through the research process in an ethical, moral and analytically cohesive manner (Polkinghorne, 2007).

4.10 Concluding Remarks

This chapter navigated through the complex maze that is implicit in qualitative research studies. Firstly, I presented my rationale for the use of qualitative research as well as the use of narrative inquiry as a method. In this, I situated the theoretical imperatives that framed the study and accounted for the epistemological and ontological that the study uses. I also provide a pathway to understanding the use of narrative inquiry to understand teachers' stories as lived and told by others (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007) as well as the declaration to follow the actors. Thereafter, I clarified my methodological journey through explicating the conceptual stepping stones used to understand the complexity that surrounded the social, political and historical contexts in which the participants worked. I mapped the difficulties of sampling and the pragmatic decisions that needed to be made from the onset of data production through to the analysis of data. Thirdly, I explained the analytical bricolage that was used where both deductive and inductive analytical strategies inherent in the grounded theory approach were applied to analyse the narrative resources used in the study. I provided an analysis using the grounded theory approach of open, axial and selective coding to realise the final categories or themes: **The Authoring of the Self**; **The Allegory of Responsibility and Care**; and **Re-imagining Pedagogical Practices of Teachers**. I also positioned the logic, justification and motivation for the adoption of concepts to explain and analyse data. The chapter concluded with an explanation of the various ethical protocols that I adhered to in the research process in order to authenticate the data decision-making process. In this, the use of methodological bricolage was explained and justified.

I now turn to the first of three analysis chapters. Chapter Five specifically focuses on understanding the lives of the teachers and the complexity that surrounds their search for identity.

Chapter Five: The Authoring of the Self

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I mapped my methodological journey which provided an explanation for the manner in which teachers' narratives were analysed and how this enabled the emergence of three important themes. In this chapter, I present the analysis of the first layer of meaning that explores teachers' attempts to make sense of who they were and the multi-layered nuances that were evident when teachers used, claimed and negotiated their professional and personal identities. This chapter details contextual, historical, social, religious, economic and political influences on identity constructions and reconstructions and teachers' practices of social justice and equity. Within environments characterised by marginalisation and disadvantage, teachers attempted to navigate their personal and professional experiences and practices of social justice and equity. Their narratives or biographies depict nuanced, complex struggles for identity in their teaching lives.

I begin the chapter by firstly looking to the past where teachers' sense of who they were was forged. Thereafter, I explore the various ways in which teachers negotiated their context, personal values, religious expectations, community expectations and institutional and broader demands of social justice and equity. Thus, this chapter illuminates the way in which teachers' experiences and multiple identities are in a dynamic, ongoing, evolving contradictory interplay with one another. In keeping with my methodological, ontological and epistemological positioning, I centralise the narratives of teachers, recognising teachers' critical capacity in their negotiation of their personal and professional identities.

The central research question that guided the analysis of this chapter was: how do teachers negotiate their identities within their everyday practices of social justice and equity? This was expanded to include an additional question: what positions do teachers take up in their practice of social justice and equity and why do they take up these positions?

5.2 Understanding the Past: *“He said that he wants his children to get education so that they can live independently”*

In this section, I introduce the **historical biographies** or narratives of the teachers in the study as a way to understand how teachers' historical and personal life experiences interact with their professional lives and identities. Barber (2002), Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004), Chase (2005), Gill and Pryor, (2006), Søreide (2006), Clandinin and Rosiek (2007),

Elbaz-Luwisch (2007), Mansour (2008), Beauchamp and Thomas (2009, 2010) highlight the significance of narratives in attempting to understand how teachers make sense of their experiences and construct their identities. Teachers' moral and political stories reflect their own racial, cultural, historical, familial and community values and interests (Thompson, 1998). These reflexive stories tell a shared tale of hardship and pain growing up in divorced, poor, struggling families beset with adversity that they struggled to overcome. It is a reflection of teachers' personal understanding of the self in the **process of becoming**. Their personal philosophies, values, cultural and historical elements were used as **narrative resources** to "explain, justify and make sense of themselves in relation to others and to the world at large" (MacLure, 1993, p.31). These **organising principles**, (Bourdieu, 1990) (re)constituted their **internal identity** of belief, thought and ideology and also provided teachers with an **external identity** of action and behaviour (Nelson, 2010, p. 337). Ultimately, their narratives tell a tale of growing up in South Africa, and how their experiences influenced their decision-making, significantly impacting on their identities and shaping their practices as morally, ethically and politically purposive.

Ngubs came from a family which 'split apart' when he was young with his mother remarrying soon after. This marriage impacted on his future aspirations and for him: *"I just removed that idea because I was growing up under stepfather... Therefore I lost everything. I never had an interest of anything... I thought it was the end of my life in terms of education"* (FI). It was only upon the insistence of his aunt who recognised that he *"had the qualities to be someone, someday"* (FI) that he attended a tertiary institution, although he was *"obstructed"* from his dream of becoming a doctor.

B.V. grew up in a strict Christian family who lived in a rural area. Her father placed extreme importance on education and so *"school was the priority in our life"* Despite the fact that her father was the sole breadwinner *"he could afford to take us all to school"* (FI). B.V. reflected on her social class positioning, firstly indicating that they lived a poor, rural life surviving on subsistence farming, but upon reflection she noted that that her father could afford to *"take all of us to school"* meant that she could no longer perceive that *"we were that poor. We were living an affordable life"* (FI). Her narrative provided an understanding of the importance of education for the family:

You know my father told us that he doesn't have much – like having many cattle and a big house; and he said if you don't have any education [shrugs]. He said

when he was young he was planning to go to higher classes. Unfortunately at home he had to leave school early. He said that he wants his children to get education so that they can live independently (FI).

Her father's insistence on education was his attempt at providing his children with positions of power from which they could operate in the future. This value of education and being independent are the values that she continued to use in her teaching career and in her relationships with learners. Her narrative speaks of **resilience**, despite political and economic constraints. Resilience and struggle provided her with the impetus to always be independent, to empower herself through professional development, and so, to develop her ability as a teacher. She completed many professional diplomas and had also completed her honours in education. Her interest in education ensured that she was not "*blind*" to educational change and development and "*had the light to proceed with the new things*" (FI).

She lived in an informal settlement that was characterised by a high rate of crime: "*So we experienced too much of murders and all those things*" (FI) He also experienced the faction fighting between the IFP²¹ and the UDF²² from 1985-1986, and his experience of violence was a motivating factor in his decision over his career. His first teaching post was at a school where the learners were involved in the faction fighting and he made the decision to move to another school. The decision to be a teacher was made by his father, who, being the breadwinner, made the decision about the type of career he was to pursue. These decisions were based on his father's understanding of status and class positioning:

My father wanted us to either be teachers, lawyers. He did not like a policeman. And of course a doctor. But because of my subjects that I chose at school I had no choice but to become a teacher... bearing in mind the curriculum that was offered at that time. So when I matriculated that is when I realised that my subjects I couldn't do anything with the subjects that I was doing at that time. That is why I ended up becoming a teacher. So I tried to persuade my father to take me to the Technikon (a vocational tertiary institution) At that time, they had

²¹ Inkatha Freedom Party: a political party based in the province of Kwa Zulu-Natal.

²² United Democratic Front: a non-racial anti-apartheid organisation launched in 1983 made up of various civic, church, student and worker coalitions.

the mentality of white-collar jobs, so he wanted me to be regarded as a teacher someone who is more professional than compared to someone who has got those skills like electricians and so on (FI).

These **culturally-based meanings** show the **status and power** that teachers, lawyers and doctors had as opposed to skills-based lower status careers, such as electricians. These cultural discourses, apart from limiting Sthe's career choices, are also evidence of the importance of familial bonds that also constrained his choices.

Joel's lack of close family life and ties was determined by the political milieu of the time. His experience of the migrant labour system, and the incumbent poverty, is one that many South Africans experienced. Joel grew up in Johannesburg, but had to move when he was about four or five years old. He then moved around constantly and had to stay in "*different places*" and with "*relatives who had to look after me*" (FI). His parents left him with relatives or anyone who would look after him, because of the scarcity of employment in the area, which made it "*very difficult for me to stay with her [his mother] and my father as well*". He lived with his grandmother for a while, and she was influential in getting him into college despite the fact that they "*didn't have money*" and "*she took it upon herself to make sure that at least I do get registration fee, which was much at that time*". He was very appreciative of his grandmother's efforts to educate him, and when he looked back, although the registration fee was "*very little*", because of their socio-economic status, he was grateful because that was "*something good on his [her] part*" (FI).

Ghettoh and Zippo were the only two participants who did not experience the constant struggle to survive that characterised the lives of many South Africans living under apartheid. Ghettoh's father was relatively wealthy, because he owned a construction business. But through apartheid legislation, "*his powers were taken out of him but he would have the workers*". This was because under the apartheid government, foreigners (like her father was), were not legitimately allowed to own businesses. Regardless of this, he still made a good living: "*the people came to my house. It was like a factory cause they came every morning to see if he could take a couple of men to take to build with him because he was a builder. My brother was the one collecting money and he was having money. In our home when we were growing up we didn't eat, you know the left over. I was coming from the rich family then*" (FI).

Zippo's parents were both teachers, but she got married at the age of 18, because of "*pressure from my husband*", who wanted them to get married with the promise that "*he would take me back to school once we get married*" (FI). After five children, Zippo and her husband got divorced, and he re-married and provided little support other than to contribute financially "*he pays for the bond and he pays for my boy 'cause he is at St. Nicholas*". But she lamented being married so young: "*I really don't know, maybe it was because I was so young. I wasn't matured at that time. Just think 'cause you know when you take that decision, it is a huge one, and I wasn't ready for that one at that time. I don't think I would agree for my children to get married at 18*" (FI).

What these narratives reveal is the nexus of culture, history and power associated with their different class positioning in the construction of the teachers' identities (Samuel & Stephens, 2000). These socio-cultural contexts exposed teachers to a broad range of what was possible in the process of developing their roles and identities as professional teachers. It showed the tensions, limitations and possibilities that existed between the teachers' own hopes and dreams, and ambitions, against those of their families. All this was constructed against what was possible given the political, contextual and economic landscapes (Samuel & Stephens, 2000). Sthe, Zippo and Ngubs talk despairingly of not being able to follow their dreams due to cultural norms and expectations and structural or political constraints. For Ngubs, his career aspirations were thwarted by his family circumstances, raised by a stepfather who caused him to believe that there was "*no way that I could be someone professional*" (FI). For Sthe, it was determined by what his father thought were prestigious jobs, compounded by the historical and political inequality that constrained his aspirations, "*because of my subjects that I chose at school I had no choice but to become a teacher*" (FI). What these teachers and their families believed was that education was a key element to escaping their disadvantaged circumstances and in allowing them "*to be independent*". Samuel and Stephens (2000) acknowledge the interplay of **history, culture and power** on the construction of one's identity. These experiences of inequality, pain and hardship were the rudders that served as **orienting tools** to envisage themselves differently in the future (Vaughn, 2014).

Teachers had to re-orientate their career aspirations because of the particular **trials** or difficulties that they faced (Peze, 2011). However, teachers like Ngubs, Sthe, B.V., Ghettoh and Joel were able to change their structural position through the aid of **identity props or resources** (Peze, 2011) that came in the form of significant "*grandmother*", "*aunts*" and

“*brethren*”, who helped them overcome these trials, and enabled them to envisage alternative futures. Whilst teachers’ life choices were constrained by political, social and community traditions, customs and norms, their significant others enabled them to negotiate their identities in more powerful ways (Coldron & Smith, 1999). Teachers’ narrative or biographical resources provide insight into their experiences of hardship and **marginalisation**. These **narrative** or **biographical resources** (Søreide, 2006, Jita, 2004) became powerful motivating tools that informed their present selves and practices (Vaughn, 2014), as well as their desire to help their learners.

5.3 Bringing the Past forward and to Life in the Present: “*I want to uplift the education of the black person*”

For the teachers participating in the study, equitable and socially just teaching and learning was premised on them reflecting on the driving forces that constructed their identities both personally and professionally. The biographical stories (Beijaard et al., 2004) show how teachers adapted and integrated their personal or internal identity of thought, beliefs and experience with their external identity of action and behaviour (Nelson, 2010). It was responsive engagement and **visioning** that drove their interventions (Thompson, 1998; Duffy, 2002; Vaughn, 2014). Visioning, according to Duffy (2002), is a “teacher’s conscious sense-of-self, of one’s work and of one’s mission [...] a personal stance of teaching that rises from deep within the inner teacher and fuels independent thinking” (p. 334). Historical and political circumstances provided the participant teachers with a particular kind of identity, and this kind of visioning which they used in their role as teachers today. These teachers used their historical background and experiences as a significant **mediating device** to guide their present and future practice (Samuel & Stephens, 2000). It is an abiding connection between their own personal struggles to overcome structural constraints as discussed previously and to challenge disparaging internalised beliefs. These personal struggles served as resources and motivation to overcome adverse conditions in order to improve the lives of learners in their care (Knight 2004).

Ghettoh’s experience of the education system was one that **disempowered** her and prevented her from accessing tertiary education when she had hoped to do so. Learners in the school she attended were accused of cheating and as a result “*their marks were held back by Pretoria and then I had to re-write my exams*” (FI). She was not one of the learners who had cheated but the blanket ruling by the Department of Education had the effect of silencing and

immobilising her because she had no means for recourse during apartheid. Her inability to defend herself caused her to leave school, and she only re-wrote her exam later on after “*my fellow students passed and had started working*” (FI). She began to doubt herself and her ability to advance, and thus succumbed to the understanding that she had no future. This resulted in her forgetting about studying for a while, and she “*worked as a domestic worker for almost a year*” (FI) because she could not fulfil her dream of becoming a nurse.

Once again she had to face adversity when her dream of becoming a nurse ended, because, as she related, she did not belong to the faction who controlled the “*screening process*” in the conflict between the ANC and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). But being subjected to such disempowerment also provided her with renewed tenacity, where she became “*a person who believes in herself and I am always positive. So I am that kind of person, who has lots of perseverance and doesn’t want to be defeated. I believe in myself and I know that I can do it and I am also competent*” (FI). This resulted in her believing that her career as a teacher was a “*calling*” and required that she “*caters for the learners’ needs,*” because there had been very few enablers in her life, other than her own internal belief in herself and her ability.

None of the teachers in the study wanted to become teachers, but indicated a deep commitment to their careers as teacher. Teaching was a career that came with a great deal of responsibility, because they were so aware of their history and their struggle to achieve. For them, teachers were “*implementers of change*” (Sthe, FI) and required that “*you open up their minds*” (Ngubs FI). B.V indicated that teaching is different “*because you grow in teaching and you learn from people you socialise with*” (FI). Joel thought that teaching enabled him to discover the manner in which people “*actually use their thinking*” and wanted to be “*part of that and to contribute towards the lives of children*” (FI). Zippo was influenced by her parents, who were teachers, and at a young age, she would “*play teacher and teach the walls*. For her, teaching was “*not an easy job*” and she constantly worried about “*achieving your goals*” (FI).

But teaching was also about making a difference and redressing the inequities of the past: “*I wanted to teach Black people to become more, to become educated, to experience things I wanted to change this. You know that during that time, you find that in schools you don’t have much. Just to make sure that they can learn even though they had no resources*” (Zippo, FI). This was a sentiment echoed by Ghettoh, who also wanted to help “*my Black or*

whatever person that [I] would meet, because I would go to any school if I was given a chance (FI). The critical reflection on the part of the teachers reveals their implicit personal philosophy for what they considered is important in teaching, and their elucidation of what drives them to teach in this context. In claiming the influence of their own disempowering experiences and its historical roots, teachers attempt to connect their internal drive with learners and their future lives (Benham, 2007).

This provides the grounding of **culturally relevant caring**, for it exposes the motivation and intentions behind their own practice. This kind of caring is what Roberts (2010) refers to as **culturally relevant critical teacher caring**. It is a kind of caring that recognises that Black people have to work harder than most other races to achieve what they have, and that for the teachers of Black children, their moral imperatives in helping Black learners is crucial. In this way, Black teachers can challenge the structural inequalities that are encountered by Black people (Roberts, 2010). The teachers in this study did not need to be told of the experiences of marginalisation as they experienced it personally, and this facilitated racially motivated action and practice in relation to Black people (Roberts, 2010). Ghettoh and Zippo's **personal dispositions** and values of perseverance, motivation and determination provided them with agency in the present. There is a link between their historical experience and their personal and professional identities that ensure that **culturally relevant caring** becomes "**embodied practice**" (Bourdieu, 1990). It is also a true understanding of what Black people endured under apartheid and the fact that "*our education was not good at all*" (Ghettoh FI).

5.4 Relation to self: "In short - I have to walk-the-talk"

Lopez and Calapez (2012) introduced the concept of **relation to self** in order to understand teachers' personal or **internal identity** (Nelson, 2010). They indicate that this concept involves the "opinion of oneself, one's dignity as a person and a sense of oneself as a unique irreplaceable person" (Lopez & Calapez, 2012, p. 82). This definition situates the narratives as one that speaks to the manner in which teachers relate to themselves, their learners and the school and also to some extent relates to their practice. It reveals how the teachers construct themselves and their learners within the framework of their context.

Findings here reveal that teachers are in the "constant process of (re)defining themselves in a manner that is socially legitimated" (Coldron & Smith, 1999, p. 712). Teachers actively position themselves as responsive and supportive to learners' needs. It is a positioning

achieved because of their understanding of their teaching landscape. Their positioning was framed around their own biographical experiences of schooling and inequality and these historical experiences, ways of thinking and acting, have become **moral resources** for their practice (Coldron & Smith, 1999; Lopez & Calapez, 2012). It shows the **reflexivity** and **self-scrutiny** on the part of teachers that go against self-interest and shaped their identities. Teachers had to constantly negotiate their personal values, professional identity and social demands as a way to find meaning and make sense of themselves. They used their strong value system to craft personally meaningful understandings of their work and purpose. These values served as **internalised prescription** and **investment** in their learners who continue to face social inequality and injustice. Through reflexivity and self-scrutiny, teachers in the study, took up particular subject positions in relation to their learners.

For all the teachers, learners were central to their careers. *“It is the kids. To have the kids at heart always. I always put them first”* (Evange SI). In Evange’s discussion with me, he used a plant metaphor to describe himself as a *“feeder”* that has *“particular capabilities”* to provide *“particular nutrient[s]”*. He actively positioned himself as a teacher who was the provider of strong educational values to learners:

So if that particular learner or particular person, comes into my class and me having not gone that extra mile to get that nutrient and to ensure that - it is quality? Then for me it means that that child goes hungry for that particular period or particular day. So I always try to avoid such that. That is mainly what for me I need to have and to make sure that I deliver it at the best having a child in the class (SI).

He shows a deep commitment and awareness of all learners and his own **self-knowledge**. Self-knowledge refers to “an awareness of one’s beliefs and theories about teaching and learning, a vision to guide practice, a sense of belonging to and a stake in the professional community and ways of imaging and enacting identities consistent with the vision and beliefs they have constructed from knowledge and experience” (Fairbanks, Duffy, Faircloth, He, Levin, Rohr and Stein (2009, p.7). Evange recognises that if he is not committed to the learners and to the teaching and learning process, then his learners will be disadvantaged and *“go hungry”*. Here, he shows his sense of **agency** as one who is in control of what is possible in the classroom, and accepts responsibility for his learners. He knowingly and purposively

places the onus of learners' success on his shoulders. For Evange, his purpose is to fulfil the instructional or pedagogical goals that he has envisaged as important to his professional identity as a provider of pedagogical knowledge. Evange is extremely aware of the context in which he, other teachers and broader contextual factors impact upon the success or failure of the learners. Thus, for him, being a positive "nutrient" and providing learners with quality education proved important.

Sthe's personal philosophy and values are underpinned and informed by current **human rights discourses** in education. He values honesty, reliability, respect and loyalty in learners and also in himself. He uses these values to inform his relationship with learners. He positions himself as someone responsible for future citizens, who can become agential in the world. He actively co-constructs this relationship with learners, because if he does not live up to his values, including honesty, then he will be responsible *"for producing kids that are not valuable or they are not ahem a valuable part of the community"* (SI). He does not see himself as merely directing the behaviour of learners: *"I see myself not as a direction board – a direction board will show you the direction as to where to go and you will never find the direction board going to that direction. So, in order to be achieve honest[y] and reliability; I have to be reliable; I have to be honest to these kids. I have to role model that"* (SI). Sthe positions himself as a role model to learners because *"the kids can learn from me... in short I have to walk-the-talk"* (SI). In order to be seen as someone who is honest, reliable, respectful and loyal, then he cannot be an inert direction board merely pointing in the right direction but someone who can *walk-the-talk* and be exemplary to learners.

He also believed that his role was to socialise the learners to engage critically with the world and thus wanted to produce learners who were open-minded: *"we don't (want) a society of straight-jacketed learners who cannot think for themselves"* (SI). Sthe's own life continued to be filled with tragedy and hardship, as his wife passed away, leaving him to raise two children on his own. But his own personal values of respect of adversity, meant him overcoming life's challenges, and this was a value that he actively sought to inculcate in learners: *"last year I had a pupil that was very challenging. He would give his own views and all those things I will allow that because I have that as my value"* (SI). Sthe's '**sacred story**' is evocative of teaching as an intellectual and **moral endeavour** "concerned with realising the values and ends in view of the teacher for the benefit of students" (Elbaz-Lubwisch, 2007, p.

376). His understanding is informed by educational discourses that see learners as **co-constructors** of knowledge and his identity as a democratic teacher.

Moreover, Sthe values being a *direction board*, and is appreciative of what learners bring to the classroom as co-constructors of knowledge. Whilst he values learners who are creative and independent thinkers, his positioning is more complex. Sthe likes being challenged within the confines of the classroom and in relation to mathematics disciplinary knowledge; however, he finds it difficult when learners present a challenge to him on a personal level. This shows that he has not fully evolved in his position as mentor and guide. He discussed a learner who did not cut his hair because of his religious beliefs: “*as a member of the church of the Nazareth so they don’t cut their hair. So I had to respect that even though I really regard that as untidiness*” (SI).

Sthe informed the learner that he needed to: “*look after your hair even though it is your religion*” (SI). In saying this to the learner, there is an implicit regulating and constructing of the correct behaviour vital for the schooling context. Sthe exerts his positional institutional authority and knowledge to inform the learner that despite religious diversity enshrined in the Constitution, he must still conform to the esoteric demands of the institution (Watson, 2006). This is also in contradiction to his own need “*not to contravene the South African Constitution*” (SI), but nonetheless shows the difficulty of having to follow what is prescribed by it. Here he positions himself as one who follows the institutional rules and procedures and shows his knowledge of his **professional landscape** (Connelly & Clandinin, 1996). These subject positions are indicative of the different professional identities that he takes up in relation to situations or events. It also shows how resources like the Constitution and his own value system are used in various and contradictory ways in attempting to explain, justify and make sense of his practice.

Ghettoh and B.V.’s philosophical values and understandings are rooted in **humanist and vocational values**, which are centered on the development of **caring** and supportive relationships with learners (Woods & Jeffrey, 2002). It shows too the connections they have with learners, with strong moral and political overtones. For Ghettoh, the only way in which she could be of benefit to learners is to have self- knowledge, and she sees herself as “*unique and special*”, and someone who “*recognises her own strength and weakness*” (SI). This self-knowledge is an important act of agency, for these are the values that she takes “*into the*

class". This enables her to make the necessary emotional connection with learners based on trust and respect and thus "*they [learners] have got that element of trust in me, so for example if somebody comes sick and he or she disclose that she is HIV positive, and let me know; sometimes they come and say: 'I've been raped', then they can come to me because they know I'm approachable, I've got love I'm strict but very fair*" (SI).

For B.V., being honest, fair and truthful to learners were also important. Establishing relationships that are based on honesty and trust was vital to both the teachers, because it shows their commitment to the learners, based on fairness and love. It also establishes criteria that inform their practice to be socially just. In establishing these emotional connections with learners, teachers position themselves in particular ways, as carers and helpers of learners, being strict and fair, and are involved in specific acts of **self-authoring** (Fairbanks et al., 2009). Ghettoh and B.V.'s critical understanding of themselves informs their relationships with learners (Lopez & Calapez, 2012).

What I found interesting about the manner in which teachers related their stories was the deep reflection that emerged. The personal values were not merely values that gave insight into who these teachers were, but were crucial for their practice. They take their context seriously, and the lives of the learners are respected and understood in complex ways. Their stories reveal the **personal investment** that teachers have in their work. They had expectations of learners, like being truthful, honest and fair, but these were expectations that they had of themselves as well. It was intense recognition that who they were and the integrity with which they performed and interacted with learners were based on something real, valuable and precious. Thus they were prepared to *walk-the-talk* and not be mere *direction boards* but to walk alongside the learners. This was in the hope that this could have a momentous and positive impact on the lives of the learners. Teachers took up various positions in relation to the learners that related to wide-ranging issues that affected learners in their schools. Their values and personal dispositions and historical understanding informed their action. What was also revealing was that teachers subscribed to many **taken-for-granted discourses** that are implicated by teaching, namely that of the love, care, dedication and self-investment that abound in teaching (MacLure, 1993).

5.5. Teachers' Religious Identity

In this part, I forward an understanding of the '**contours**' of the various teachers' narratives around religion (Barber, 2002; Nelson, 2010). The ontological narratives presented here illustrate the complexity of teachers' **habitus** and "**durable dispositions**" which have become the principles that organise their actions (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 13). Participants' revelations suggested that their individual history determined the manner in which they lived their lives and practised their teaching. Barber (2002) and Mansour (2008) argue that it is critical to understand the manner in which the broader social culture is embedded within the life experiences that shape and re-shape teachers' beliefs and practices. This is further entrenched through the institution itself, which has a particular **institutional habitus** that fashioned and constructed teachers' ideas around religion (Barber, 2002; Mansour, 2008).

The influence that religion played in the life of the teachers was significant, and informed teachers' identity as caring and loving. From the interviews, it became evident that there was a degree of cultural continuity between teachers' personal belief systems, their opinions, practices and attitudes, as well as knowledge, and that these have their origin in religion (Mansour, 2008). The interviews also revealed the contradictions and dilemmas that teachers needed to negotiate when these belief systems, opinions and practices no longer held influence. This was an attempt to **re-orientate** their sense-of-self as teachers, (Hanley, Bennet & Ratcliff, 2014). It is particularly biographical, in the sense that individually teachers' positions as Christians were complex, diverse and unpredictable. It shows their **internal** identity of thought, belief and ideology that is congruent with that of the institution (Nelson, 2010, p. 337).

5.5.1 The Institutional Construction of Identity: "*May love dwell here among us every day*"

Both schools where the research was conducted subscribed quite strongly to a Christian ethos. As was discussed earlier on in Chapter Four, one of the schools was a Section 14 school, and the contractual obligation was that a Christian, and in particular a Catholic ethos, was to be furthered. In this section, I show the significance of the **institutional identity** of the schools and the manner in which this **regulated** and constructed teachers' identities and practices and also socialised the behaviour of learners. It also determined the kind of relationship that existed between the school, the context and other stakeholders. This was evident in the daily ritualistic practices of the school. In the morning, before the commencement of the lesson, a prayer was conducted. This was followed by registration and

then the teaching of particular lessons, as per timetable. On assembly days the whole school gathered in the assembly area, where the assembly started off with Christian prayers and hymns praising God. When staff meetings took longer than anticipated, or when teachers were late or busy, learners would sing hymns without being prompted to do so.

Praying was a ritual that was also practised, and had become ingrained or embodied in learners' practices. They would pray before meals, before the commencement of lessons or break or the end of the school day. All prayers involved thanking God for food, knowledge, teachers and the day. At assembly, learners would recite the school prayer, which gave credence to the purpose of school for both learners and teachers. This is significant of the manner in which learners have interpreted the **institutional habitus** (Barber, 2002), where this has become **routinised, embodied practice** (Bourdieu, 1990).

At Happy Ville Primary, teachers would meet every Tuesday during the break for 'praise and worship'. In these meetings, teachers would read from the Bible, pray and have a discussion about what was read. All of the participants in the study from this school participated in these meetings. Very often Evange (being a minister) would lead the prayers. Ghettoh indicated also that *"even the teachers sometimes ask me to preach and in front of others and so I share"* (FI). This is significant, as it shows that the teachers' identities as Christians were interdependent or intertwined with their professional identities, and were similar to that of the institutional habitus and identity of the school itself. These rituals, practices or performances that both learners and teachers engaged in had the effect of reinforcing their Christian identity within a Christian school, and affirmed those that followed the ethos of the school. The school as an institution was also meant to promote and inculcate or mould the learners, and Christianity provided them with the means to do that.

Joel believed that Christianity: *"enabled one to do things in a proper way at all times and you won't be found doing wrong things. Even if they come from those environment where they do wrong things but the minute they come to school, the school is there to sort of lay their foundation – a very good foundation for them to be able to change, to be able to also talk to their parents about what is expected of a person. So we feel that religion is very important to do things the right way at all times"* (SI).

Joel's arguing for Christianity as practice that enables "*one to do the proper things in a proper way*" and shapes his identity and that of the learners for it is in the school that "*the foundation – a very good foundation is laid*" so that learners "*are able to change*" despite their "*environment where they do the wrong things*". Here, Joel's utterances depict the legitimisation of the school and the environment as two distinct and different parts. This differential binary, however, is one that creates the school as being positive and the environment or schooling context as negative, and where the "*wrong things are done*". The possible effect of understanding by Joel is that the school community is marginalised and excluded (Clarke, 2009). Christianity has become the **discursive authority** that the teachers recognise and place value on and give relevance to in their practice and sense-of-self (Clark, 2009). The school prayers also reinforce the discursive authority of Christianity and read thus:

School Prayer of Sunshine Primary:

Dear Lord Jesus, please help all Sunshine Primary pupils and our teachers to take great care of us. Thank you for the happiness they bring. Lord, have mercy upon us. Amen.

School Prayer of Happy Ville Primary:

This is our school. May we live happily together. May our school be filled with purpose. May love dwell here among us every-day. Love of one another, love of life itself, love of all people everywhere and the love of God. Let us remember that as many hands build a house, so everyone can make the school a loving place. Amen.

These ritualistic practices and prayers have a mediating influence of **institutional habitus** that contributes to the various ways in which both learners and teachers act. It provides a particular kind of script that is located within broader social and cultural discourses of what religion and schooling should do. Teachers and learners must show "love" in order to be happy. Implicit in the prayers as well is the understanding of dependency. Learners are dependent on "*our teachers to take great care of us*" as those who "*bring happiness*". These school prayers show how Christianity, caring and love have become embodied experiences

and practices. The Christian discourse of love and care is strong and implies a sense of obligation that provides teachers with an **external identity of action** and behaviour (Nelson, 2010, p. 337). These rituals and prayers are **institutional resources, artefacts** or **identity props** that teachers are able to use to effect and make sense of who they are and how they should practise i.e. their **positioning** within the institution (Søreide, 2006; Peze, 2011).

This **Christian discourse of love and care** is one that teachers identify quite strongly with in their attempts to provide learners with a sense of well-being, and decrease the effect of an inequitable context. However, in none of the school prayers is there an emphasis on actual teaching, but more about the school and teachers having to provide the material, emotional and spiritual support needed for learners (Perumal, 2014). It provides the basis for working with **ethical fidelity** (Perumal, 2014). The discourse in the school prayers positions the teachers as **providers of love and care**. What is also visible is the construction of learners as passive, and dependent on teachers being responsible for their care and happiness. In the second prayer, there is a great deal of emphasis on collective personal pronouns, ‘we’ and ‘our’ – projecting an understanding of communality that all are responsible for ‘love’ in order to live happily together and it is the responsibility of all to make the school a loving place.

This, however, is contradictory to Joel’s understanding of the environment, because for him the environment is a negative space that influences learners in inappropriate ways. The environment is not included in the personal pronoun ‘we’ and he alludes to the division between the school and the environment. Bourdieu (1990) indicates that the school as an institution is in fact “the productive locus of a particular habitus” (Nash, 1990, p. 435) that functions to entrench particular ways of doing, seeing and experiencing reality. The school prayer entrenches a religious discourse around religion and love. It also functions to define, shape and regulate teachers’ behaviour, thus **structurally determining** teachers’ identities (Bourdieu, 1990). What is evident in the above **socially accepted mechanism**, or **habitus**, is the description of the role that teachers are required to play and what that love entails, where, as the prayer reads, teachers are there to “love and take care of us”.

5.5.2 The Influence of a Christian Upbringing: “*These were things we were taught as children*”

What all teachers in the study revealed was that they had a strong Christian background and had grown up in Christian homes. They emphatically stated that they had Christian beliefs “*I am a minister*” (Evange, SI). “*I value my religion. Christianity, ja ’cause that makes a real*

person, that mould you and makes you what is expected of and by other people” (Ghettoh SI), and that these Christian beliefs had historical roots in their socialisation as children:

B.V.: *As I grew up from a Christian family there are things we were taught as children (SI).*

Ngubane: *Well I grew up Christian, and when I came to this school I was also led to understand that it is a school within the premise of the church St. Augustine, and therefore you cannot go away or move away from the ethics of the church (SI).*

Ghettoh: *I was brought up in a Christian family, where we go to church, where we pray, we speak positive things... Most of the time I spent in the church, church services discussing things for Christ. ...My parents were Christian (and) they were strict (SI).*

Their identity as Christians and the **identity-regulating discourse** (Peze, 2011) surrounding Christian **stewardship** enabled them to understand the reality of their context, a context surrounded by poverty and a multitude of social problems (Botha, 2014). More importantly, it provided them with an understanding of what and how they are supposed to act in their role as ‘stewards’ of God (Botha, 2014). Thus, it is an attempt to understand “we teach who we are” (Hartwick, 2014, p. 2) and that “we do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs” (Delpit, 1988, p. 297). Delpit (1988) comments further that as teachers, we give up our beliefs, but that this often results in the turning of “yourself inside out, giving up your own sense of who you are”, which is difficult (Delpit, 1988, p. 297). This orientation is what Books and Ndlalane (2011, p. 87) refer to as the “litmus test for justice” because in taking care of those who are in God’s eyes the “last are first” is ultimately rewarding in God’s eyes.

This understanding of Christian stewardship is based on the belief that all human beings are equal, and that a steward has the responsibility of taking care of God’s dominion. *“This started when we were young, and because of the Christian belief that we should care for people. I wish everybody enjoys the same thing that everyone is enjoying but it is not like that. That is why I care much for those children who are not affording” (B.V. SI).* For B.V., taking care of God’s dominion meant showing learners that she cares about them and

preventing them from experiencing ‘discrimination’ if they cannot afford the necessary schooling requirements. Here there is an intersecting of both personal and professional identities, and this determines what she feels she needs to do to support the learners, both emotionally and socially as the situation requires (White, 2010).

For Evange, Christianity also gave him a sense of purpose, but reflected the responsibility associated with acting out his religious identity, where he saw himself as a ‘shepherd’ for learners. In discussion, he talked about how his Christian background and his work as a minister dictated that he work hard and be committed to the learners. His religious identity or self-knowledge ensured that he worked hard in his lessons:

I feel that I am doing my best in taking care of such things and I comply with the expectations of the schools, such as attending morning session, all the time taking responsibility without having to be called by duty, extra mural activities; and I believe that I am allowing learners to grow as much as they can when they are in my lessons and in my presence. So ja, and I feel and also I think that I am ‘shepherding’ them in the right direction to be good and effective citizens (FI).

Thus, for Evange, his belief in God and his identity as a Christian minister provided him with a means of **visioning** (Duffy, 2002), where he was able to use both his heart and spirit to structure how he responded to his job as a teacher. His personal philosophy of what his job entailed showed not only his commitment to learners but also his independent thinking:

I am a minister. So, aah, it all begins in the conscience. Whenever I am doing my lesson planning, doing all my programmes, all my planning; aah, so for me the first thing is that I do it with a clear conscience. You know, like, as in to say, for me, what I plan is what should be done. So that is what I strive to do. So at my planning phase, I pray about it, so I find that for me it is very important that I fulfil what I put up front for myself (SI).

There is synergy between his personal pedagogy and his religious beliefs that he uses to guide his practice; certainly in the manner in which he teaches and in the organisation of his instructional activities. Here his religious beliefs inform his practice but also structures social

relationships with learners. For Evange learners need him to guide or shepherd them to be *good and effective citizens*.

5.5.3 Christianity as a form of moral regulation

Teachers were positioned as being responsible for moulding and disciplining learners and this was in tension and contradiction. In navigating this role, teachers had to make decisions about corporal punishment which proved to be difficult, and thus gave them a sense of unease. Some teachers saw their religious principles in harmony with their professional identity, regardless of what was laid down by law. Others, however, felt that their positional authority as teachers, and what was expected of them, was in contradiction.

5.5.3.1. The dilemmatic space of positioning: “*Spare the rod, spoil the child*”

Fransson and Grannäs (2013, p.7) postulate that “**dilemmatic spaces** are social constructions, resulting from structural conditions and relational aspects in everyday practices”. In their daily work, teachers are required to manoeuvre between their classroom dynamics and their personal and professional identities. In attempting to negotiate and navigate these contextual spaces and personal and professional identities, dilemmas arise. Dilemmas require making decisions that may involve practices of power, which, according to Clarke (2009), are both political and ethical. However, the extent to which teachers were able to act ethically and navigate these dilemmatic spaces in their interactions with learners was determined by discourses surrounding the use of corporal punishment, discourses surrounding Christianity, as well as cultural conventions from the community itself.

Below I show how teachers manage the dilemma of corporal punishment, and the manner in which teachers balance different options and positions in order to deal with this issue. The dilemma reveals how teachers negotiate between different values, positions or actions. I firstly show how the tension between teachers’ roles as caring as depicted by their respective schooling institutions and their religious identity is in conflict with their **professional identity** and policy. I show further how their religious identity presents a dilemma, compounded by the understanding of parents about corporal punishment as acceptable, but how teachers are constrained by policy determinants. Through these **identity trials** (Peze, 2011), the teachers attempt to **orientate** their sense-of-self in order to construct a **coherent self** (Søreide, 2006).

Teachers at the school worked within an environment that was complex and difficult to negotiate. All except two of the teachers admitted to using corporal punishment. They revealed that they worked in an environment where parents themselves practised corporal punishment at home, and that they had these same expectations of teachers when it comes to discipline in the classroom. Having to practise in such an environment provided teachers with a sense of justification for their practice of this cultural convention, where they expressed that it was the “African way”. Some of the participants indicated as follows:

Ngubs: *For African, yet it is. Because in our homes, in their homes they do get that. So in a way it is effective for us as Blacks, because we are used to that. Although it has been banned by the government* (Ngubs F1).

Zippo: *They don't say anything because most of the parents tell you to use it. When you call them to school if something happened, they will tell you: 'Ma'am here is the solution, use the corporal punishment', or, 'why don't you use it when I told you to?'* (Zippo, F1)

Evange: *You find that one of the things is that the parents are very, very strict. If they are naughty, they are getting punishment* (Evange, F1).

This is compounded by teachers' own beliefs in this regard, especially their religious beliefs and their understanding of their role as ‘in-loco parentis’. The prevailing thought is that disciplining a child is a biblical instruction to parents, and therefore teachers acting ‘in-loco parentis’ have a duty and obligation to carry out this imperative (Hulme, 2009). Teachers' religious beliefs and identity and the current political discourses surrounding corporal punishment, represent fields in which teachers operate but the field has contradictory demands (Bourdieu, 1990). The social and cultural capital afforded to the teachers by virtue of their social identities in relation to learners within the field of education, enabled them to then experience and use their power in a variety of ways.

Ghatak and Abel (2013) have indicated that, for many, Christian beliefs and practices are historically rooted in the repressive use of force, and that using force is a regulating mechanism to shape the attitudes and behaviour of people towards different forms of authority. Thus teachers operate within a field where they have power associated with their

status as well as their identities as Christians. This, however, was in direct contradiction to political discourses and human rights discourses that negated the use of corporal punishment and the abuse of power (Govender & Sookrajh, 2014). However, in keeping with Boltanski's (2011) understanding of the **critical capacity** of individuals, teachers used religious rules, values and norms as material artefacts or narrative resources (Søreide, 2006; Peze, 2011) to position themselves in acceptable ways. These were, however, acceptable in relation to their context, but not in relation to broader society.

With the exception of Evange, the rest of the teachers had practised and developed their professional identity during apartheid times, where teachers were placed in strong positions of authority and wielded great power. Thus, teachers' past experiences and practices of corporal punishment had greatly influenced the manner in which they acted in the present, and provide insight into the tensions and contradictions to which they are now exposed. B.V. indicates, *"previously, we used to use corporal punishment, but nowadays, we are not allowed to use it, but we put in their minds that the stick is the one that direct the child* (SI). Sthe also noted *"When I grew up I used to get a lot of hiding whenever I do something wrong"* (Sthe, SI).

In their study, Govender and Sookrajh (2014) explain that teachers today are however working in an environment where democratic legislation, human rights discourses, and wider societal discourses surrounding corporal punishment, determine whether teachers' practices are regarded as acceptable or not. For the teachers in the study, the decision-making process is highlighted, and the choices that individuals make arise from the competing alternatives that are present in the dilemmas that they face. Here, the choices and options that teachers have to consider are whether or not to follow their religious beliefs, which are supported by the cultural conventions prevalent in the school community, or do they follow legislation that has outlawed corporal punishment. This had implications for the decisions that teachers made or did not make and struggled over.

The issue of corporal punishment was an ever-present dilemma (Fransson & Grannäs, 2013), for teachers, because it was bound up with their personal and religious beliefs as well as their roles as 'in-loco-parentis'. This is made more difficult given the emotions that teachers felt when they had to deal with their context. This was a difficult choice for the teachers, because it was also about their affective inability to manage the learners who were constantly not

adhering to school and classroom practices. This often prevented teachers from not being able to meet their teaching goals, which in turn prevented learners' access to knowledge. Sthe and Zippo speak about becoming 'angry' and 'irritated' (Sthe, SI), and "will just hit" (Zippo, SI). It is thus a relational dilemmatic space, and shows the constant **(re)positioning and negotiation and renegotiation** between different forces of influence.

Evange: *You know for me, as I said earlier, I would say disciplining the child is different from spoiling the child; and for me my values are the Bible. And the Bible will say I don't, I have never read the English version of the Bible, but for me, the Zulu one says: 'the stick will never kill a child' – obviously, used in a proper manner (SI)*

B.V.: *You know, today most of the children do not accept being disciplined. Then I used to insist to them and tell them referring to the Bible. We have to be disciplined, even Jesus himself discipline the people who were misbehaving. Remember in the church they were selling all such things. Then I insist on discipline until they accept that discipline is important. But it is the way we discipline them (SI).*

Sthe: *When I grew up I used to get a lot of hiding whenever I do something wrong. But nowadays you see what the Constitution says that corporal punishment is or has being totally abolished. You have to abide by that, you are being told what this is doing to the child. Even though at some stage I do believe you spare the rod, you spoil the child (SI).*

Ghettoh: *as a Christian there are word from the Bible that said that you must if the child has done something wrong, you must correct a child. So they said spare the rod, spoil the child. But because of these that are imposed by the government it's too hard. If I just give a small (smack) even my grandchildren will say 10111. So you can't exercise those you know. Things like that like love, some people are not born out of love, they are stubborn. So you can't just impose. So you have to try. It's a long term thing (SI).*

All the teachers above subscribed to the Christian adage of 'spare the rod and spoil the child'. This "game of truth" or "regime of truth" (Foucault, 1984, p. 74), which has historical roots in Christianity, serves a normalising and regulating function, and can be seen to have become

firmly entrenched and embodied within the teachers' habitus. These teachers' perceptions regarding the importance of their role as **stewards** and 'shepherds', come with the associated role of maintaining authority, control and orderliness. Discipline structured in this manner may be more enduring as a result of the conditioned structure of the habitus. It also reinforces the fundamental belief that teachers have of power and authority being the basis for control and discipline (Venter & van Niekerk, 2011). Venter and van Niekerk (2011) maintain that disciplining a child is a biblical instruction, and for the teachers in the study their role as stewards and shepherds, determines that they fulfil this biblical instruction by punishing learners who are "*lazy*" and "*stubborn*" and who only adhere to classroom rules and regulation through the use of corporal punishment: "*Sometimes they are naughty...you go for punishment because of the behaviour, because of the work it is not done... there are many things that the children are doing in class and then you go for corporal punishment, but the department says not*" (B.V., FI).

What is also evident from the excerpts is the understanding that this is what teachers grew up with as part of their own Christian upbringing. This had the effect of normalising corporal punishment. As cited, Evange expressed his view that "*the stick will never kill a child*" (SI) while Ghettoh's understanding is that "*if the child has done something wrong, you must correct a child*" (SI), reinforces this mechanism of control and punishment. Their understandings are also given historical roots, where "*even Jesus himself disciplined the people who were misbehaving*" (B.V. SI) and Ngubs' shared cultural understanding of "*it is the African way (FI)*" normalising and naturalising this technique of power and control. This also establishes the teachers' authority as one who has to control and "*insist on discipline until they accept that discipline is important*" (B.V., SI), and also justifies the use of corporal punishment as a way to maintain this (du Preez & Roux, 2010; Govender & Sookrajh, 2014).

Teachers like B.V., Sthe, Zippo and Ghettoh show how the internal battle impacts on their ability to externally control the learners, which, as shall be presented below, results in a dilemma. For Ghettoh and B.V., their "**internal religious identity** of thought, belief and ideology" is in conflict or tension with their "inability to exercise their **external identity** of action and behaviour" (Nelson, 2010, p. 337). Ghettoh's inability to live up to her religious beliefs and ideology of her role as steward to "*correct a child*" is "*too hard*". For B.V., learners not doing work and homework results in her personal sense of accountability, and her Christian values of honesty are "*...gone, because I have to do things that I'm not*

supposed to do – like corporal punishment. I have to punish them in an unfair way, like putting them on the floor so that they feel the pain and do the work. Sometimes you do get out of the values that you have” (SI). This creates an identity that is fragmented, and prevents the teachers from being comfortable in their professional identity as someone in a position of authority over others.

Their discomfort is complicated by government policy and for Ghettoh *“laws that are imposed by the government, it’s too hard”* (SI). Sthe furthers this argument indicating that whilst Constitutional demands prevent the use of corporal punishment, the negative effect of adhering to this is *“you spare the rod and spoil the child”* (SI). What this shows is the tension that exists within teachers’ **subject positions**. This presents the problem of how to negotiate their deep and enduring cultural conditioning, seen in their habitus, with the constraints imposed upon them by structural conditions, evident in the Constitution and related policy that governs their working lives. Corporal punishment is no longer viewed in an acceptable light and is in contradiction to societal norms and values but this has created a vacuum for them. Tension exists between the different subject positions available to teachers and leads to confusion. Policy positions them in unacceptable ways that has legal repercussions and their religion positions them as stewards having to fulfil the duty to God

Within this **dilemmatic space** (Fransson & Grannäs, 2013) they no longer recognise where and how to position themselves and feel a sense of helplessness at their loss of positional authority and power. They position themselves as accepting of their professional identity but it is one that is in contradiction to their personal and religious identity. Ritchie and Wilson (2000), Day, Stobart, Sammons and Kingston (2006), Thomas and Beauchamp (2010) and Fransson and Grannäs’ (2013) forward the understanding that personal and professional identities are interdependent and inextricably linked. Teachers feel uncomfortable with the situation but given the complexities of their careers and the consequences for the use of corporal punishment, they need to make the choice of a **‘good enough compromise’** in a given situation (Fransson & Grannäs, 2013). This **good enough compromise** is about not losing their jobs but rather that policy demanded that they abstain. Interestingly, in the first interview teachers admitted openly that they used corporal punishment, but by the time the second interview was done, they had “changed” their minds. This, I believe, is attributable to stringent departmental regulations. Their taken-for-granted assumptions informed by religion

and culture that had previously provided them with a sense of security and safety are rendered fragile and elusive. Teachers note this dynamic as follows:

Ghettoh: *If I give a small [smack] even my grandchildren will say 10111 (SI).*

Sthe: *It is because of the fear that you might lose your jobs. So that my kids will go hungry, so I have to abide with this (SI).*

Ngubs: *In these days I was saying when the government says that you must not use corporal punishment and this stuff and that stuff. You must try other ways of disciplining a child. I was asking myself, 'what are those things mechanisms we can use in order to discipline a child?' You say, 'walk out of the class' is not good; ok, 'you stay behind when the school has dispersed - do this!' and that is not good. What is a good, what is a good punishment? [...] But in these days we don't because it is tricky now. We have been warned against that. So we don't do that. For me, in my case, I don't do it anymore. You sometimes feel like doing it but then you say hey I'm going to lose my job (SI).*

Here, Ghetto and Ngubs reflected on the use of corporal punishment and found their positioning within the discourse difficult to negotiate. For them, it is “tricky”, and has repercussions that can affect them in adverse ways like losing their jobs and being unable to feed the family. It is notable that they do not consider the negative effects corporal punishment might have on learners. Instead teachers’ deep cultural conditioning resonates with enduring cultural practices where corporal punishment is legitimated. Ngubs questioning of “*what is good punishment*” shows his frustration at his lack of control and being constrained by the Constitution, policy and societal discourses. Thus, their ‘good enough compromise’ is to desist because they fear legal reprise even though at times they are tempted to use it. There is a slippage between religion, cultural conventions and policy with teachers constantly negotiating and re-negotiating their beliefs and practices around corporal punishment. Teachers have not stopped using corporal punishment because they regard it as an abuse of power or as morally incorrect as implicit in human rights discourses, but rather as a result of the legal implications that they could encounter. Therefore, teachers’ previous **unified selves**, have become somewhat **fragmented**, and although there is an attachment to

old values and beliefs the pressure exerted by external forces has resulted in the formation of a new persona, albeit **fragile** (Woods & Jeffrey, 2002).

Sthe, however, was able to go further, and reflected on what corporal punishment actually does to learners. He had attended workshops, and this gave him new insight into the negative effects of corporal punishment on learners. Sthe indicated:

Just last week, we attended a workshop on safety and security. They emphasised that we need to do away with this thing, because it is really, really, really bad. You might come to a classroom and see the kids listening to me only to find that they are full of fear. Not that they are disciplined but they are scared. That is what corporal punishment is doing to the kids and that is what we have come to realise (SI).

Earlier in the interview, he gave an example of the advice offered to him by another teacher about how to think about learners:

...he said at one stage, I was watching these people training their dogs to help the police find whatever you know. He said to us – do you know what they do? Whenever the dog has done something good it is reward. It is positive reinforcement. So the dog will always want to do what is good for the trainer so as to please the trainer. If a dog who cannot talk can respond like that, why don't we use that in our kids who can listen, who can talk, who can reason with us? That is why I started to understand that really, because at times, some of us are lazy to take, to think of alternative ways of discipline. We just resort that that very shortcut. So, that is why, at times, it is difficult to use those values (SI).

Here, Sthe, through an act of **agency** and **self-authoring**, has understood the constitutive nature of historical religious discourses and has made the decision to resist contextual positioning. He has constructed, negotiated and 'argued' (MacLure, 1993) for an identity that enables him to challenge conventional practice and provide him with a new sense of belonging consistent with new beliefs and values (Fairbanks et al., 2009). His adaptability and flexibility, as well as critical capacity to respond to the changing environment, is reflective of tolerance and respecting learners, who are different to him, but who have value,

and should be respected. However, it is my contention that this is also bound up with feelings of frustration, exhaustion and anger associated with their work situation, and thus, this dilemma will continually crop up with teachers having to negotiate constantly the slippery slope of whether or not to use it. It is, as suggested by Fransson and Grannäs (2013), a ‘dilemmatic space’, where identities are constantly negotiated, constructed, (de)reconstructed in the positioning of oneself in powerful positions. Here, teachers find their personal and religious identities are being challenged due to policy that is imposed externally, without their consent. This influences a teachers’ autonomy, where they are positioned by others as well as by themselves. Bourdieu’s (1990) concept of habitus has helped in describing the ingrained cultural conditioning of teachers with regard to corporal punishment, as enduring cultural and societal practices.

Interestingly, Evange was the only one who believed that corporal punishment and love were synonymous. For him,

I would say that it is more of channelled into love and discipline... but when I use it they are reminded that they are here to study and here to love” (FI)
Thereafter, he indicated, *“obviously used in a proper manner. You don’t want to beat a child until she bleeds. Just to make sure, just to show them there is punishment for the wrong that somebody does. I think my love superseded all the learners being scared of me. Learners are not frightened (SI).*

The combination of the words ‘love’ and ‘discipline’, shows Evange’s attempt to make sense of his practice and negotiate his multiple identities of minister, teacher and disciplinarian. For him, one of the ways in which he shows the learners that he cares for them is through the use of discipline. Here, discipline or corporal punishment is used for a specific reason and that is to show learners that there *“is punishment for the wrong that somebody does.”* Evange’s sense of identity as a teacher includes a sense of duty to the academic needs of the learners to ensure that learners have an understanding of the purpose of schooling. In his role as pastor and steward he must ensure that this occurs through the use of ‘discipline’. For him it would be remiss if he failed in his duty to God and to his personal understanding of his role as a teacher if he did not discipline learners.

He is adamant that learners are “*not scared of me*”, because he shows his love and interest in them in this manner, and disciplines himself to only act within certain parameters to ensure that learners are not fearful. This enables him to justify his understanding of his positioning within Christian discourse of corporal punishment and his use thereof. Evange is a minister and his reasoning and sense-making is taken directly from the Bible (Proverbs 13:24), and is used to legitimate the practice of corporal punishment. For Hulme (2009), this kind of **pastoral power** is essentially about the need to maintain control and social order, but this also points to the deeply ingrained **cultural disposition** or habitus. Given that this kind of punishment is borne out of love, it normalises and legitimises the practice of disciplining out of love. Evange’s justification and **rational decision-making** is based on the practical understanding of the social context in which he operates as well as his own sense of accountability to God and his ministerial position (Boltanski & Thevenot, 2006).

5.5.3.2. The sovereignty of Christianity: “*When in Rome, you do as Romans are doing*”.

Teachers in the study believed that Christianity was important and that it was their duty to ensure that Christianity was practised by learners. This is despite their acknowledgement that other religious groups formed part of the school.

B.V.: *There are those who are Shembe, but the policy of the school that the parents agreed to that majority is Christian, so the policy follows the Christian religion. I have got no problem with that, because I am Christian. I wish all of them to be Christian. For me, they should follow because to me it is the right thing. Being a Christian also makes one more accepting of learners and other religions. We have not encountered any problems that impacts on us as teachers. It is because they are still young (parents). They just toe the line. They do what we tell them to do. Here, most of the teachers at school are Christian. I don’t think there is anyone who is not Christian. That is why we don’t encounter problems here. Yes, we do accept each other (FI).*

Ngubs: *when I come to this school, I was also led to understand that it is a school within the premises of the Church St. Augustine, and therefore you cannot go away or move away from the ethics of the church and therefore you’ve got to follow it to the letter because it is Section 21 (14). Therefore, there in no way you can deviate from the expectations of the church because the school is in the premises of the church.*

Therefore it is part and parcel of the church and also part and parcel of the department of education (SI).

In response to my probing of what happens to the learners who are not Christian, teachers indicated:

Ngubs: *Yes they are, they have to adjust. It's a must for them. Even in the letters, the prospectus, letters that are given to parents it is explained and they've got a choice. If you don't want to come to Happy Ville, you better go to other schools. There are plenty other schools around here which are not following the same procedure as we are following Section 21 (14) here at Happy Ville. So, it doesn't disadvantage them, because you must put one thing in your mind, that you came here for learning and there may be other things that you are going to learn whether those things you like or not, but you've got to learn those things. Therefore, when you in Rome you do as Romans are doing (SI).*

Joel: *Even if there are and I'm sure we do have those learners, but our school, like I said it's a public school in a private property; we have to abide by all the rules of the policy and the constitution of the country, but since we are in a private property where Christianity is one of the ethos that has to be carried forward. There is no other way. As much as it's like that I do understand that there are these learners. I feel for them, but at the same time, there is no other way to abide by their policy (FI).*

B.V.: *Parents never go to church. I remember the other day I was teaching life skills. We were talking about baptism and I enquired from them – Do you go to church? Some said no we don't others said yes we do. Those that don't go, I say why? They say at home no one goes to church. Some say only the mother goes to church and the father and us never go to church. Then I say no, its important to go to church and you must do baptism because all religion have their own beliefs but if they don't belong to any religion then I insist that they must belong under a certain religion because there are things that you learn from church. There are things that you learn from the members in the church itself. Then that is also a problem to the values that you have (SI).*

In the above excerpts, teachers identify quite strongly with the dominant religion in the school and society. They were all church-going Christians. Their narratives show their adherence to and promotion of Christianity as the **dominant** religion. For the teachers, parents were given the choice as to where to send their children to school. Ngubs justifies this adherence, because, for him, parents make informed decisions and choices. Parents are informed of the school's Christian ethos through various written forms of communication. They therefore have access to information which they can use to then make informed decisions about whether or not their children will fit in. For the teachers, the fact that parents were aware of the policy as laid down in the code of conduct and prospectus, justifies their practices of Christianity as the dominant religion in the school.

For Ngubs, the function of the school or the main aim of the school is to learn, and it doesn't disadvantage them, because "*you must put one thing in your mind that you came here for learning*". He recognises that there may be "*other things that you are going to learn whether those things you like or not but you've got to learn those things and adjust. It is a must for them*" (SI). Since learning is a priority at the school, this prevents any disadvantage that learners may experience. Adjusting and adapting to the rules and practices of the schools is a '**game**' (Bourdieu, 2000) that parents must learn to play, where learning takes precedence over other considerations.

B.V.'s suggestion that parents "*toe the line*" (SI) is an indication of the lack of involvement of parents in the children's schooling lives and parents are happy to follow "*when in Rome, do as Romans do*" (Ngubs, SI). This justifies their desire that all learners should be Christian, but is also an indication of teachers having to take on the role of parents, because in their opinion, parents have abdicated their responsibility to care for their children. Christianity is the only frame of reference for the teachers, and they use this in relation to learners, and in doing so, reinforce the dominance of Christianity. B.V's positioning within the discourse is contradictory for she indicates that Christianity makes her more accepting of other religions and learners, but then, wants all learners to be Christian, and insists that they belong to a church and "*do baptism*". This shows complete identification with the dominant religion of the school and an inability to act out her position as someone who is accepting of other religions in this context. The effect of this could be the alienation of learners who are not Christian.

Joel views the school's religious practices and teachers' views as discriminatory, but feels powerless to do anything and lacks agency to challenge policy declaring that "*there is no other way*". His professional and personal identities are in contradiction, but he uses his professional identity to justify the need to adhere to policy. The school as an institution makes use of **identity regulation devices** (Peze, 2011) in the form of departmental policy and regulation to ensure the dominance of Christianity. Joel attempts to negotiate a position in which he is comfortable with his own sense-of-self, but at the same time, to satisfy the needs of both the state and the institution. He finds it difficult to simultaneously claim his position as teacher and as a person who respects diversity. It is a positioning of contradiction. In this instance, both Joel and the parents do not have autonomy to challenge the policy and parents and learners end up complying and so they "*toe the line*" and "*do what we tell them to do and that there is no problem*" (B.V., SI).

The relationship between parents and learners and the school is an asymmetrical one, with parents and learners being powerless and having to accept the dominant Christian policy of the school. This is because an organisation like a school has a semantic function of 'holding reality together' (Boltanski & Thevenot, 2006) and the Christian reality is in accordance with teachers' beliefs and policy imperatives of the school. This results in teachers arguing for a given or taken-for-granted reality that affirms their world views – an understanding that they do not want to give up (Boltanski & Thevenot, 2006). It is clear that it is difficult for them to identify a minority viewpoint and instead, they use institutional barriers to legitimate this dominance.

What is evident from the above excerpts is the use of legitimating strategies by the teacher to justify the presence and domination of Christianity in their schools. The rationalisations by teachers form part of their justification framework to legitimate the presence of Christianity. B.V.'s moral battle pertains to helping the learners find meaning, because according to her, it is only "*in the church that they learn things and from members of the church*". This is her moral fight to help the learners whose parents do not attend church services "*no one goes to church*" (SI). The teachers follow these obligations because of their belief in their role as stewards of God, and because they also are responding pragmatically to an environment that for them is not supportive of learners' needs. Both the school and teachers reinforce and reproduce accepted social values and norms (Clarke, 2009). Whilst Joel is aware that this is discriminatory, he does not act on it. For the other teachers however, they believed that they

should teach learners Christian values and norms because parents have failed to do so. It is a means for learners who gain social and cultural capital and thus power, in which to be socially accepted and affirmed. Moreover, these Christian practices and values are resources that learners could use to negotiate their home environments.

5.6. Bringing democracy into the fray: “It means all people sharing common humanity”

Because teachers had suffered injustice themselves, many of them spoke about democratic values of social justice and equity as resources to use in making sense of themselves and their practice. It is what Gee (2001) refers to as **affinity identity**. Here, affinity identity revolves around the influence that external groups had on the formation of teachers’ practice. These external groups and influences have come in the form of the Constitution and Rights discourse evident in policy that informs their thinking. Thus, for teachers, the values of social justice and equity that were rooted in humanist understandings of caring, were of paramount importance (Woods & Jeffrey, 2002). For them, social justice and equity meant “*promoting a just society by challenging injustices and valuing diversity*” (Sthe, SI); and for purposes of “*understanding and getting along*” (Joel, SI). It implies for B.V.: “*fairness to our situation as teachers. You have to be fair to all the children and not discriminating. I mustn’t discriminate against that child because he is from that background. Instead of discriminating I must give support to the child though sometimes I might not be a hundred percent perfect doing that but I make sure that the child is a society, is a future society*” (SI).

For B.V., success for learners was about the provision and access to support. B.V. ensured that learners with learning difficulties also received help through the educational psychologist with whom she liaised. She acknowledged her lack of skills in being able to help the learners, but ensured that they were placed at a school where they could be given the necessary support because for her “*I must look at what the child needs then I must attend to that ... they get educated so that their future can also be bright*” (B.V., SI). This was an attempt to reshape and shift their identity, where, despite being subjected to unfairness, discrimination and injustice themselves, they now value fairness, diversity and understanding and try be enablers for a positive future for the learners to be achieved.

For Sthe, it meant having a vision of what he wanted to achieve with the learners, “*I have to have a picture of what I want to achieve – a picture of how I want my kids to be. We all know that we have the imbalances of the past and we have to redress those imbalances*” (Sthe, SI).

For Sthe and Evange, redress of those imbalances meant working to help learners academically: “*whenever I design my lesson, I have to take [social justice and equity] that into account*” (Sthe, SI). Evange attempts to “*teach the learner to the best ability, bearing in mind that learners come from different backgrounds, different families and so on*” (SI). But it was also about engaging learners critically with their context, in order to help learners cope:

So I want to present a true story. How do we deal with this? [...] so in that manner I learn about their background as well.’ There are difficulties in doing this with ‘whole class’ but it is a way of enable ‘every learner gets a particular chance to voice out and to share that experience with others’. It is not easy [...] but I try, I try, I try. You watch and you listen to the learners and see how can I help this one and this one, this one (SI).

Both Sthe and Evange use their experiences of apartheid and social oppression in order to reshape and navigate their actions in the present (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Learning and engaging with the learners in a critical manner meant that they were able to act in a **culturally responsive manner**. It relates to the manner in which they construct their own identity in relation to the historical external force of apartheid and oppression. Their experiences and knowledge of oppression has thus expanded possibilities for their practice.

But, for Zippo, attempting to challenge deep structural inequality was problematic and gave her a sense of unease and discontent because she recognised that at times the expectations of the Department, herself, the environment, and societal discourses were too difficult: “*I’m so worried Mel, I was thinking I don’t know how, because you asked me about social justice and equity and I was thinking, okay – the department tells us to teach about social justice and equity whereas there is no social justice and equity here*” (SI). For Zippo, the contexts in which learners live and learn still resemble those during apartheid, and thus, there is still no “*social justice and equity*”. She stressed the importance of being able to connect with the learners in order to provide the necessary support, but still:

I think it’s very important to understand, you know, the environment that the child comes from [...] Before teaching, that will help you so much, you need to know your learners, each and every one of them although it’s not easy. [...] but it is so important to know them so that you can see the strength and weakness of

that learner. I usually do this every time early in the year, I will give them a paper to see how much do they know in order to give me an idea. I know that I do have an authority to maintain what is just, you know every child has to be treated equally and fairly. Sometimes it is difficult; really, it's not easy (SI).

This difficulty is further intensified by departmental requirements and societal expectations of how to respond to diversity and inclusivity. Zippo mentions:

you know, I was attending a workshop and they told us that on class you need to have three different papers. The one you know for those that are quick and for the middle ones and for the slow ones in order to accommodate them all. Do you really think it's possible every time when you plan your lesson to come up with such? But what I really do, maybe when I'm dealing with my lesson, I will just put some questions for those low, mediums to balance [refers to the different learning capabilities of learners] (SI).

For her, the large numbers, external accountability in the form of testing, and her lack of knowledge of how to help and respond to inclusivity, all present a problem. However, she still persists in her quest to respond to her own values of honesty, accountability and integrity; to live up to her own need to “*be happy when you sleep at night*”. She does this by catering for the different cognitive levels in her class but questions the practicality of being able to cater for all the levels of needs in every lesson. There is a struggle between her internal identity and the ‘**ought self**’ prescribed by society and the White Paper Six on Inclusive Education (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). The ‘**ought self**’ in the policy calls for her to be able to practise in ways that are too arduous given her context.

Her questioning of the imperative is an attempt to challenge societal and departmental expectations and accountability discourses about the ‘**ought self**’ of teachers, and to gain some agency over her own practice. One is able to see the difficulty that Zippo has in trying to make sense of herself, where her practice seems to be unstable for her. She is attempting to live up to her own personal sense-of-self, of having to make a difference in the lives of marginalised learners, but finds it difficult. Her sense of **disequilibrium** is amplified because she is not sure how to meet departmental and societal expectations of quality education, diversity and inclusivity. Here, she is questioning not only her effectiveness and ability to

fulfil these obligations and expectations, but whether or not it is fair to be asked to do so. It is this questioning of an imposed ‘ought self’ that provides her with a sense of empowerment and direction to act out what is pragmatically possible in her context.

These moral and political stories present an internal picture of what guides teachers’ practices in attempting to respond justly to learners’ needs. It showed the internal dynamics at play of teachers wanting to help learners and engages an understanding of their experience, as constructed and reconstructed on their terms (Thompson, 1998). These personal stories not only give insight into teachers’ personal values learned from their parents, community, culture and politics, but also inform teachers’ responsibility towards those in their care. The following section illuminates the various positions that teachers take up in responding to their learners’ needs.

5.7 Positioning the Self: The Multiple Roles of the Teachers

In this section, I provide an understanding of the various roles that teachers are required to take up in response to policy, community, and religious and wider societal norms and expectations. The teacher narratives reveal that these roles are underpinned by the value of care, and show the complex ways caring functions within their contexts, shadowed by race and class inequality (McKamey, 2011). Teachers’ acts of caring are explained through the other roles that they take up, where context is acknowledged and responded to in synergistic and antagonistic ways. It shows the multiple, contradictory and compelling ways in which caring is enacted within the schooling context. I firstly discuss the relational role of caring that teachers use in their practices of social justice and equity. The focus here is on caring for the personal and pastoral needs of learners. This is followed by an exploration of the context that positions and places expectations on teachers to take on further roles as, all-rounders, being a supportive teacher and a socialising moral agent, where teachers struggle for authentic identities.

5.7.1 The caring teacher: “*Caring is just the thing that we were brought up [with]*”

Within the primary school, the role of the teacher as someone who is caring is well established and fundamental (Hargreaves, 1998, 2001; Thompson, 1998; Day & Leitch, 2001; Zembylas, 2003; Knight, 2004; Noddings, 2005; Watson, 2006; O’Connor 2008; Roberts, 2010). Findings from the above researchers, acknowledge the importance of caring, which seemingly undergirds the work of the teachers in this study towards equity and social justice. Following Noddings’ (2012) understanding of caring as relational, I formulate this

relational understanding as a means to enact justice. Here, teachers' understanding of the context provides the means to (re)create conditions where learners are able to experience academic success and emotional security. I have interpreted teachers' work as intentional, reflective, and action-orientated.

The teachers, as stated above, recognise that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are also academically and socially disadvantaged. Evange's reflection on the plight of education for poor learners points to this poignantly: *"I think we cannot run away from the fact that poor communities imply poor schools in terms of resources and so on... so you always want to think about how does that affect the learning of the child"* (SI). Not only is this a reflection of his understanding of historical and social inequality, but also includes the urgency required to change this inequality. Whilst some teachers in the study do blame students for educational outcomes, others see results as a consequence of the education system that continues to plague poor learners.

Prevailing discourses and narratives construct expectations and subject positions about teachers and their work (Barber, 2002; Vogt, 2002; Perold, Oswald & Swart, 2012; Wrench & Garrett, 2015). However, I have found that the understanding of caring explained by Antrop-González and De Jesús (2006) convincing, as it offers a more nuanced understanding of caring that is relevant especially to marginalised groups of people. It therefore extends the relational aspect that Noddings (2012) argues for to include perspectives from Antrop-González and De Jesús (2006). Antrop-González and De Jesús (2006) are in agreement with Thompson (1998) that the manner in which educational caring is theorised does not fully take into account or privilege cultural values and the political economy of marginalised people. Their conceptualisation of **critical care** explains that people of colour have particularised, intentional ways of caring and educating (Knight, 2004).

I have in the previous sections explained how teachers' experiences and belief systems provide them with purposive intentions to help their learners. This was seen to be grounded in an **ethic of responsibility** to family, history, church and community (Thompson, 1998). Anthrop-Gonzales and De Jesús (2006) present a theory of critical care, recognising these complexities and providing a nuanced understanding of the role of caring in education. An ethic of critical care situates **high quality relationships**, both **personal** and **academic**. It also encompasses what the researchers term '**hard caring**', which is a form of caring that is

characterised by supportive, instrumental relationships and high academic expectation. The practices of the teachers in this study are based on measured hope and action, where teachers acknowledge their environment and attempt to make small inroads that challenge the prevailing discourse of Black education as poor and unsuccessful (Wilkinson, 2015). There are contradictions, tensions and dilemmas that constantly surface, but show teachers trying hard to make a difference, albeit sometimes unsuccessfully. Teachers here do not have unreasonable expectations, and they do not set unreasonable standards for the learners, but they are consciously attempting to make a difference in the lives of the learners. There is a pragmatic orientation to what is required (Thompson, 1998). In this section, I focus on how teachers explicitly acknowledge the contexts in which learners live and school. I forward also the way in which teachers attempt to negotiate these environments, and the role that social and cultural contexts play in this negotiation. Further, I concentrate on an explanation of the supportive, personal relationships that are explicit in critical care.

The challenge for the teachers was to demonstrate caring behaviour that was **responsive** to learners' needs. Perceptions of caring are influenced by the context of the classroom, the community as well as teachers' own cultural socialisation into the culture of caring:

B.V.: *Sometimes when we grew up we were living with our neighbours, who were poor, or some were rich. Then some that were poor. Most their fathers were working far from their families [...]. Then we were taught that if maybe a neighbour gets into your house you should give the person tea. Maybe a child is short of a jacket, share with that child. Then caring is just the thing that we were brought up [with]. Then this is in my mind (FI).*

Ghettoh: *Even the neighbours would come to us. We were having a group of people, young and old, who would come to look for jobs. So we were used to share even food with them. Sometimes my father wouldn't eat if he got a visitor and he found that there was nothing in the pot. He would give it to that person who had arrived whilst we were eating. So we learned that from him (FI).*

For both teachers, cultural norms of sharing with their fellow man is what they grew up with and it was these norms and values that provided them with the resources in which to practise their relationship with learners. Thus, their meaning of caring is one that is grounded in their knowledge of disempowerment. This understanding diverges slightly from Noddings'

concept of engrossment. **Engrossment**, according to Bergmark (2004), is the understanding that everyone wants to be cared for and teachers take on the caring as if it were their own, where learners' needs become the teachers' needs as well (Bergman, 2004). Here, engrossment holds that everyone *has* to be cared for. Teachers' pastoral care responses here can be traced to Levinas' (1969) philosophy of relationships with the 'Other'. In a **face-to-face** encounter with learners, teachers are required to respond ethically to the call of the 'Other'. It is the recognition that they have a responsibility for and to their fellow man and humanity. The relationship and the responsibility that one has to the 'Other' is infinite; and there are no reciprocal expectations but rather continuous obligation to care (Edgoose, 1997; Bergmark & Biesta, 2003; Alerby, 2006; McMurray, Pullen & Rhodes, 2011).

Teachers responded both consciously and unconsciously, using their own personal values and morals to guide their actions in order to respond to the "otherness of the other" (Zembylas & Vrasidas, 2005 p. 70). Given the multitude of complex social problems that characterised learners' lives, teachers' own responses were often difficult, and signified their torment and guilt - questioning if they had given enough or if their efforts were ever enough (McMurray et al., 2011). Teachers could not isolate the environment from schooling, given that whatever occurred in the environment had a direct impact on what was possible for them to accomplish in the classroom. When faced with the overwhelming demands from so many learners, teachers often violated their own values and sense-of-self. Often, teachers resembled a '**divided self**' held hostage by their own embodied sense-of-self, and their need to respond to the call of the "Other" (Bergmark & Alerby, 2006).

The following section details teachers' behaviour, thoughts and beliefs that demonstrate acts of caring, and what they believe are demonstrations of culturally relevant caring.

5.7.2 Acknowledging the context: *"I would say 70 to 80 percent of our learners are not well."*

In the quest to connect with learners in an ethically responsive manner, teachers in the study firstly acknowledged the context in which they taught, and in which learners lived. It is a context fraught with trauma and deeply-rooted inequalities that have negative consequences for the well-being of learners (Cassidy & Bates, 2005). The inequalities prevalent in the context are inextricably bound up with larger social and historical inequalities of poverty, marginalisation and disadvantage. There is a sense of urgency evident in the narratives that emerge from their understanding of the social, cultural, political and historical contexts of the

lives of learners and the urgency for some form of action (Knight, 2004). All teachers' narratives acknowledge that learners' contexts are experienced in a variety of ways, but it also shows the positions that teachers take up.

All the teachers cited socio-economic problems characterised by extreme poverty, constant hunger, unemployment, crime, abuse and disempowerment: *"kids come to school and they never had the breakfast"* (Ngubs, FI); where some absentee parents *"have got different diseases or learners staying with guardians"* who only want to *"get the foster grant"* (Sthe, FI). Foremost in Ngubs' understanding of the context was the issue of crime and drugs: *"you know from corner to corner there are drugs; from corner to corner there are taverns and so on and so on. The rate of crime is at that level (pointing upwards) and you are here with kids who are influenced by those things and the child will experiment or do those things that they have seen right in their community, right within the school"* (SI).

Evange grappled with issues of constant hunger that learners are faced with every morning that impacts on their learning: *"you think for somebody who travel so many kilometres on an empty stomach for that particular morning, they will be like really waiting for that break time waiting for that meal"* (SI). Here, he comments not only on issues of hunger but also about the lack of access to schooling for many learners. Zippo, meanwhile noted:

Most of them are orphans. They are living with grannies and I don't see them bothering themselves with checking if the child has done the work. Sometimes they don't have resources and these are challenges that we face in the classroom. Sexual abuse is very high, very high in the community. I have noticed that some of the learners don't have parents; they live with aunts, uncles, and they are so abusive. When you try to talk to him or her, you will find the reasons. It is not easy and it is not nice, because you know they come to school hungry, with no food (FI).

For Joel, learners' home situations were troubling. He expressed the understandings of orphans and working conditions that take parents away from their children and the fact that there was lack of support for learners, because of disenfranchised family life. He indicated:

Some of them they do not stay with their parents - they only see them once or twice a month. Like I said before, they come from families where they are children, they are responsible for their homes, isn't it? So when they come to school they lack love. Some of them they come from abusive background. But almost, I would say 70 or 80 percent of our learners they not well. Many of them, many of them (FI).

Ghettoh's responses were around the social issues of orphan-hood: living with grannies, coming to school without doing homework, and looking after others. For her, they "*need so much love because most of them are orphans*" (FI).

B.V. asserts: "*most of them, because when I discover that there is a problem or the performance is poor in this particular child. I try to have a chat with the child and maybe it is where I discover that this child is performing in this way because of the background especially the orphans*" (SI). All the teachers in the study indicated that learners do not get the necessary support from home with their schoolwork. B.V.'s response to this is "*you know what; sometimes you end up not giving them homework, because they come with the homework not done, because there is no one to support them. Sometimes I give them time in class and assist where there is a problem*" (SI).

In these narrations, teachers imply that these issues affect them greatly. When asked about the challenges they face, learners' contexts featured first and foremost as a "**shared stock of narratives resources**" (Søreide, 2006, p. 539) and one that provided an understanding of how they made sense of their teaching environment. It required that they position themselves as supportive, caring and understanding of the multitude of social issues that learners are exposed to ranging from abuse through to drugs and extreme hunger and poverty. Some teachers therefore constituted their positions as being "*loving and good teachers* (Ghettoh, FI), *teachers who try our best,*" (Zippo, SI) and teachers who are alert to learners' problems. It required that teachers changed their previous practices, and to be more cognisant of the lack of support that learners are exposed to in their homes. For, Ghettoh, this meant listening to learners: "*so I have to sit down with them and hear their stories, because I can't take action, or maybe give them the punishment like detention, because I know now that the cause*" (FI). Joel and B.V. took the time to learn about those learners experiencing learning difficulty and abuse, and referred them to an educational psychologist to get the required

help. They attempted to help the learners, because they recognised the societal challenges they face, and responded pragmatically, rather than blaming the learners.

Teachers' reactions show that they respond to learners because they care about learners' well-being way beyond what is healthy. This is in keeping with findings from various studies, which show that teachers in disadvantaged communities exhibit high levels of care for those they teach (Barber, 2002; Perold et al., 2012; Vogt, 2010). Teachers' understanding of the caring role is also in keeping with the philosophy espoused by Levinas (1969) who argues that when a person is confronted by the 'face' of another person, the act of absolute and infinite responsibility for and to that person enters into the relationship. The frailty and need expressed by the learners or the "Other" dictates that in the caring relationship the teachers take on the role of 'servant' to the needs of the learners (Levinas, 1969, p. 199-200). It is only in taking on the role as servant to the "Other" that a person's life becomes meaningful. The "Other" and the relationship that develops becomes a person's reason for being and existing. It is an ethical relationship because in looking into the face of the "other" one also recognises that the "Other" is vulnerable and in need of help. It is therefore not an equal relationship but it is one that teachers take on and in so doing prioritise the learners' needs over their own.

This, however, exposes teachers to being vulnerable because they are being 'controlled' by learners who have needs that are overwhelming and thus causes some teachers to become disorientated. This is also made more complex in that caring has become embodied practice and throughout my observations and interviews there was no indication that teachers were unable or incapable of responding to their learners' pastoral and socio-economic needs. This is I believe because of their **ethic of responsibility** underpinned by family, church and community historical roots (Thompson, 1998). Teachers acknowledged that learners were faced with constant difficulties and that they required the help from teachers - but apart from attempting to alleviate their difficult circumstances they recognised that certain problems like poverty are structurally determined and impact on what is possible to be done. However for Sthe, school could be a safe haven, a reprieve from the social malaise that learners are constantly exposed to, (Perumal, 2014), albeit for a while *"that is why at times I tell them: 'listen here, don't put your family background in your head because the current situation of your background is not your problem. That problem is taken care of by your guardian, your father or who so ever... so forget about everything and focus on your learning but when they go back to their homes it is a different story"* (SI). Here, Sthe attempts to help learners forget

all that they are constantly exposed to when they are at school, but he also understands that this is a short-lived solution, and that when the learners return to their homes, problems still continue to exist.

All he is able to do is provide an environment that he has direct control over, where learners can forget their difficult lives even if it is for a while. He can make a difference to their lives by providing them with the opportunity to learn. Nias (1996) has indicated that teachers invest a great deal of themselves into relationships with learners that impact on their personal and professional identities. The narratives of the teachers establish not only the importance of learners in their lives, but also the roles that they are required to play both personal and professional.

5.7.3 Being an all-rounder: “A good teacher is one who is an all-rounder to the kids”

All the teachers cited the various roles that they are required to play in order to alleviate the struggles that learners face on a daily basis. The understanding of how to show compassion, care and love for learners is indicative of their acceptance of societal and institutional expectations and norms. Being a responsive, caring teacher was fundamental to their personal and professional identity as teachers (Barber, 2002). They therefore took on various roles and responsibilities to portray their caring and compassionate subject positioning, dependent on the anomalies of learners’ home environment. For teachers, a good teacher is not only one that responds to the academic needs of learners, but one “*who is an all-rounder to the kids. You become a parent, you become a teacher, you become a social worker and you become everything that the learner needs. That’s what makes a good teacher. You become a friend - a learner needs a friend*” (Ngubs, FI). For Ghettoh and Evange, the role of parent, psychologist and nurse was foregrounded. These were roles that emphasise the affective needs of learners, where Ghettoh indicated, “*it take more of your time and you have to be different, you have to be dynamic because you have to cater for the learners needs – you have to be a nurse, a teacher a social worker a mother so it is like a calling*” (FI). These were roles that sometimes Evange did not feel comfortable with, noting that “*... it is a challenge for me, because I have never had a child*” (FI), but he still felt that the role of the parent was greatly needed.

Joel took his role as parent very seriously, even regarding learners as his children:

I regard learners... the same age as my children. So some of them I give them love and I expect them to also do the same. So when I look at them I see honest

people well with problems of course. So when they do things, I understand, because they behave like children. And also, taking into consideration the background, where they come from. But you having them around it really says to me, ja, these are my children as well. I need to treat them like I treat my own children” (FI).

For B.V., her role as a mother was very important. It allowed her to respond to the problems of her learners, and she felt a special connection to *“orphans who come to school and ‘you can see that the child is down today and I try to find out what is the problem and we discuss the problem” (FI).* Talking to the learners was effective and essential for her in her role as psychologist, because that is when learners told her about their problems, and it was her way to show her affection for them. It often meant her responding to physiological needs, to ensure for example that they get breakfast, because there is *“no one to give them breakfast to them that day. I have to attend to their problems as a parent and not a teacher. And we try to by all means solve their problems and [...] you give them care and support when they experience problems” (FI).*

Teachers’ stories foreground the role of the teachers as responsible for transforming and changing the lives of learners. What is also telling in their stories is the lack of parental support for learners, which not only reinforces but also reflects societal norms and expectations of the importance of teachers in the lives of the learners (Barber, 2002). It also shows the nature of **ethical decision-making** required of teachers to protect the rights of learners (Forster, 2012). Responding to the emotional and social needs of the learners meant being extremely aware of what they were experiencing. Evange was able to do this, and found it *“very easy to spot out”* when you see learners *“withdrawing from things, performance in the class, behaviour, then such things raise interest” (FI).* It provided him with the means of knowing how to relate to the learners, by being careful about the manner of speaking, and *“I make sure that there is some kind of support within the class, maybe as a counsellor, friend and somebody whom whichever the person is can be approached and talked to” (FI).* It meant listening to the problems of learners and being supportive of them. The role of counsellor and friend was also powerful, and thus, Ngubs indicated: *“So that is how I get to know their problems. You get closer to the child and then you know how to help the problems. It becomes easy for them to cope with you when you have that special place for*

them. So, if you keep a distance away, they feel scared and they don't obey and they don't pay attention" (FI).

Sthe spoke of having to be a *"father figure"* to a girl who only knew of her father when he was *"in the coffin"*, but he also detailed the surveillance that teachers are subjected to and the discourses surrounding teachers, saying: *"I started playing that role of the father figure, but at the same time, you have to be very careful, because people can easily spread rumours... and will say, 'why does he always stay with this kid?'"* (FI). Here, Sthe shows the difficulty of having to respond to learners' needs. This difficulty presents itself as an identity trial (Peze, 2011); being collectively responsible for learners produces feelings of vulnerability and caution (Forster, 2012).

For Sthe, the importance of family was fundamental to his practice. This importance was emphasised when his wife passed away, and he had to take over the complete care of his own family. For him, playing the role of a parent was his way of establishing an extended family within the schooling context. Families play a very *"important part in the well-being of the child."* Therefore, providing this parental and family role to learners was important, because he did not want the children to be *"a black sheep of the family."* He, like the rest of the teachers, placed high expectations on their 'ought self', as responsible for learners' well-being. His feelings of vulnerability stem from the institutional and community scrutiny and perceptions that question the behaviour of teachers who develop close relationships with female learners that make him doubt his role as a father figure. He finds it difficult to follow his teaching purpose as *"agent of change"* who can make a difference in the lives of learners through the development of positive relationships. Sthe's positioning and identity as provider of family values, as parent and father-figure resonants with societal, community and policy expectations - but these are in contrast to his experiences of trying to help learners and fulfil his different roles. This results in an identity trial where he must constantly provide argumentation to secure a personal identity that is acceptable (MacLure, 1993). This points to identity as being in a state of flux, *"confirming and reorienting"* in accordance to contextual demands (Peze, 2011, p. 2).

These narratives show the conflict between the ethical and moral dimension of teaching. Teachers here, for the most part, are accepting of their role prescribed by policy and discourses that surround the educational landscape. Evange and Sthe, however, show their

feelings of vulnerability and insecurity about the expectations placed on them and their role as teachers. What their stories invite is a closer inspection of the requirements of policy and the need to provide teachers with the necessary support to practise with ethical fidelity (Perumal, 2014).

5.7.4 Positioning the supportive teacher: *“But with the little we that we have we must offer those who are more desperate than us”*

The **material conditions** (Perumal, 2014, 2015) evident in the lives of learners had implications for the actions of the teachers. Here, teachers negotiated structural constraints that impacted on the well-being of the learners, and provided insight into the manner in which teachers chose to care for learners (O’Connor, 2008). Their caring shows how they sacrifice their own needs in order to provide for the pastoral needs of learners, where the emotional dimension of caring as embodied practice is illuminated.

Given the complexity of the problems that learners faced on a daily basis, Ngubs, for example, provided for learners who needed both financial and emotional support. His caring for an orphaned learner shows the emotional experience of living up to his values. He indicates that the learner *“did not have food and was battling with everything – there was no food, nothing”*. He responded by giving the learner money to buy groceries, but went so far as to appeal to members of staff, *“I said guys I know that we don’t have money but... with the little that we have we must offer those who are more desperate than us. There are these kids who are really desperate and they cannot afford these things”* (FI). Teachers in the school took up different subject positions, mostly as financial and emotional supporters, which Vogt (2002, p. 251) refers to as **“care as parenting”**. Vogt (2002) indicates that this caring role can be in tension, because it devalues the professional notion of teaching. However, teachers here respond to what learners require, so that the teaching and learning can continue. Both the caring role and professional role of teachers are in sync.

For Ghettoh, when she discovers that learners are unable to concentrate because of hunger *“then you have to take your own lunch and give it to them Sometimes you have to buy or take from your home – give a little bit so that they can have. Sometimes you give your cash”* (FI). This altruistic gesture is influenced by her identity as a Christian and she spoke of being *“happy to help those you cannot help themselves”*, believing that *“blessed the one who giveth and the one who receiveth. So I am waiting for God’s reward one day. So I am looking forward to getting something one day”* (SI). Her accountability to God in providing learners

with the help is reminiscent of her role of stewardship and being responsible for the whole family of humanity and is indicative of **connected teaching** (Botha, 2014). She shows that her practice as a Christian is an **orientating compass** to fulfil her role as steward and lives in the hope that she will receive “*God’s reward one day*”.

Both Ghettoh and Zippo also worried about the health needs of learners. During my observation of the events in the school, I often witnessed Ghettoh providing financial support to learners who were ill, and Zippo often spoke about “*sometimes you know if I find that a learner is sick, I just take the money out of my pocket and take him or her to the doctor*” (FI). Here teachers invest themselves in what their caring role requires and represents (Zembylas, 2003). It is a caring role or position that has established norms against which they measure and judge themselves. These norms are rooted in their experiences of **socialisation** as children and represent the intertwining of their personal and professional identities. It also provides **justification** for the decisions that they make in giving learners the financial and emotional needs required.

The understanding and connectedness of the teachers to their learners involved also ensuring that learners were not marginalised because they did not have the necessary requirements in order to fit in. These teachers informally ‘adopted’ learners to take care of and encouraged teachers in the school to do so as well. Ngubs found himself ‘adopting’ many learners and “*right now you can see that there are plenty of kids that are becoming my kids. In Grade Five there are two, in Grade Six there are two*” (FI). In Grade Seven, he adopted a learner who didn’t have anything to wear for the school farewell. So teachers would “*buy the clothes, the shoes as a donation... that is what we usually do*” (Ngubs, FI). *Here the teachers are caring and committed*” (Ghettoh FI). Here, teachers show their caring and commitment to learners by taking care of their needs and responding to them in socially just ways.

Whilst they responded positively to learners, teachers also showed their sense of being overwhelmed and helpless when faced with the sheer requirements and expectations from learners. In heeding the call of the ‘Other’, teachers have taken on the responsibility to take care of learners but having to unceasingly give to the ‘Other’ is emotionally traumatic and teachers find this difficult and often to their own personal detriment (McMurray et al., 2011). This presented concerns, dilemmas and confusions as to how to provide the necessary support to learners. Ngubs found himself in a quandary over the need to always fulfil his subject

position as “parent” and “provider” whose “heart is open for anything that they need”. He shared:

I myself you know do have financial problem just because you know everything is money. So it becomes difficult, because sometimes you may be worried, and you want to assist the child, and then you say, but I don't have money” (SI). However, learners’ expectations are too difficult for him. “*right now there are kids that regard me as their father and come to me if she needs something... I pay for them. They don't expect any excuses, because they think: ‘this is a teacher and he always got money in his pocket’... only to find that at home there is no bread for your kids. You don't say that and you rather go to someone and ask for a R10 to give this kid so that he or she will never become disappointed* (FI).

Here, Ngubs sacrifices his own family’s needs in order to ensure that he lives up to his role as a father and thus a provider. Even whilst he is able to reflect and engage with this, he is unable to distance himself from positioning himself as being a saviour of his learners. His personal beliefs of the responsibilities associated with parenthood, causes him to borrow money as he cannot fail to live up to the expectations from the learner. He finds the many roles that he has to take on difficult and trying “*this is very hard for me because you feel how can I divide myself and be a mother, a father to this kid*” (FI). His narrative incorporates the emotional relationships and obligations to self and others, despite this presenting an enormous challenge. Here, it is possible to observe his personal sense-of-self or identity as deeply connected to his professional identity. In attempting to make sense of himself and these navigations of the expectations, he uses his personal beliefs and knowledge about the social context as a resource to guide his actions, where he would “*rather go to someone and ask for a R10 to give this kid*” (FI).

He thus reflects on the dilemma that he faces and adjusts to the demands that are imposed on him. For Ngubs, this is an ethical stance that he takes up, and expresses and constructs the commitment that he has to learners, as well as attempting to make a difference to the lives of learners who are “*desperate*”. He continues to perpetuate learners’ dependence on him, because he sees himself as their father, and cannot separate the personal from the professional. But what Ngubs’ narrative also shows is the impossibility of heeding the call of the “Other” and being the ‘**servant**’ to their needs (Levinas, 1969). The relationship based

on absolute responsibility is what provided Ngubs with an understanding of why and how to be a teacher. However, the unceasing obligation and need from learners become overwhelming and the **passive encounter** in the relationship is lost (Levinas, 1969). The passive encounter establishes a relationship that allows people to be more aware of one another. It encourages the understanding that the “Other” can never be fully known but must be accepted. The self does not enter into the relationship (Morrison, 2009, 7). For Ngubs, however, he finds that he can no longer be the passive servant who is “more in touch” with the learners and starts to question his ability to help the learners when he has to sacrifice his own family’s needs and borrow money from colleagues (Morrison, 2009, p. 7). He tries to re-establish the relationship by borrowing the money from a colleague because he fears that his relationship with learners will change.

5.7.5 Positioning the self as moral agent: “*They will become adults, parents and so on.*”

Beauchamp and Thomas (2010) indicate that the role that teachers play in schools at present has diversified, given the pressures of globalisation and differing cultural and social expectations. The role of socialisation and the inculcation of morals which was once the responsibility of families and religions have increasingly fallen to teachers. Teachers here showed that this role was not clearly defined, was difficult to enforce, and meant recreating their professional identities in accordance to expectations of the context. For them, it was about having to positively influence the learners by acting as a role model for them. However, taking on this role was paradoxical, given that teachers themselves worked within a particular societal discourse of diversity. Schools are generally seen as taking on this role but are expected not to violate the values of diversity and tolerance enshrined in the Constitution. Teachers here were not quite sure of their role, although they recognised it as important. This is further exacerbated by the lack of definitive consensus of morality, and the process of inculcating moral values to learners. Teachers instead used their own personal values and dispositions, as well as their Christian values, as a guiding tool or resource by means of which to make determinations of what is ‘right’ and ‘wrong’. These are then the subjective inclinations of teachers who are also socially constructed (Pantic & Wubbels, 2012).

Joel, Ngubs and Sthe indicated that many learners lived with grandparents and mostly with grandmothers, who “*really rely on us to teach these kids... to pass on these values*” where “*these grannies... are even spelling out that they are old now- they cannot do much to these kids*” (Sthe, SI). Here, the grandparents have given their rights and responsibilities as

guardians and family members to teachers, specifically due to the fact that they are aging. In such a situation, teachers are given the role of **authoritative custodians** of moral values and virtues (Pantic & Wubbels, 2012). Grandparents here believe that the teaching of values can fall under the ambit of teachers because for the grandparents, teachers have the necessary authority and power and required knowledge and expertise to make the best decisions for the learners.

Ngubs took this role as authority figure quite seriously, indicating *“it is the way what we grew up under in our homes and I also teach that because I know what the expectations of their parents. They also want that and, in a way, we are helping their parents to adopt exactly what they teach them at home”* (SI). Ngubs’ understanding of his role is **culturally bounded** (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011). For him, he already knows what the expectations of parents are, mostly because *“in our culture as Africans, I think not as Africans only, it is a worldwide things, we teach learners moral values at home informally”* (SI). His authority and knowledge comes from his culture as an African. His African culture *“which we grew up under in our homes”* had certain expectations of adults as inculcators and teachers of morals and values. It is what parents expected them to do and these expectations, teachers own cultural traditions, norms and community knowledge provided them with the necessary power to make decisions about what to teach the learners, and he adds: *“you teach them respect. They must greet in the morning, when you meet them, they must greet you. All that stuff, morals are always there”* (Ngubs, SI). This authority and positional power is entrenched and legitimised, because they are working to the best interests of the learners.

Teachers also entrenched their position as socialising agents of good morals and values because, for them, parents do not play a role in teaching learners values and morals. Joel indicated that learners’ backgrounds played an important role in him making a decision about whether or not he should be the moral guardian. For him, the fact that there are *“no role models in their communities”* meant that he had to take on these *“challenges as educators”* (SI). This was true of Zippo as well, *“some parents are druggers, so if I don’t tell the child the truth to guide the child towards, you know, the correct way to direct him or her correctly. It means the life of that child is dead. It’s so important for me as an educator to do that”* (SI). Ngubs also indicated that vices like alcoholism prevented parents from teaching their children the required and necessary values. *“Therefore I find it is my responsibility to impart that information to them so that they will grow up becoming proper citizens of this country”* (SI).

It meant “*building the character of that learner*” where learners “*must be moulded spiritually, physically as well as academically*” (Ghettoh, SI).

Ghettoh expressed her concern that not being able to build the character of a person ultimately leads to disrespect from them. “*I’m sorry to make a typical example of Malema,²³ he is highly educated, but if you look at him, how he is doing. Is there a respect to elder people, there is something that is lacking to him. He is capable of doing things, but the manner he does is totally out of question*” (SI). She went further to indicate that parents are responsible for learners’ behaviour, but that they expect teachers to do their work. Ghettoh expresses her self-doubt in being responsible for the teaching of values to learners, but also questioned whether or not the education system can make a difference. She explains:

We’ve got typical examples when they say: ‘you go to school, Mrs. Ghettoh will deal with you, go away.’ Sometimes when the learner does something wrong out of the school, the parent will come and tell us that I’m fed up of so-and-so, he comes late to school, he is playing till late, he is going with the wrong friend, he is mixing like that, he is starting to do bad things, and as a parent, what are you doing about that? [...] If a parent is afraid to discipline a child, how can I? I’m trying my best, but if he can’t comply with what is done at school? I understand or I was told that education starts at home, that is informal education. So, the parents have got a bigger role to play in their children’s lives, so I am adding on what is at school (SI).

Here, Ghettoh attempts to reconcile her own understanding of her role with that of the community and parents. Ghettoh’s questioning is an example of what happens when the criteria for a teacher’s role as a moral agent is not prescribed and given. It causes a fragmented, unstable sense of identity. For her, the responsibility to discipline and instil respect is in fact the responsibility of the parent first, and then the teacher, asking: “*if a parent is afraid to discipline a child how can I?*” Here there is disjuncture between the expectations of parents about her professional role and her personal beliefs about what she is responsible for. Whilst she is prepared to be responsible for moulding the character of an individual, discipline and controlling of learners, outside of school is not, in her own view,

²³ Julius Malema is the leader of a political party in South Africa called the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF).

part of her professional action (Watson, 2006). She consciously positions herself differently to the role expected of her from parents.

Reflexively, Ghettoh's narrative shows that discipline and behaviour management is problematic for parents as well as for her as the teacher. But for her, *"the parents have got a bigger role to play in their children's lives so I am adding on what is at school"* (SI). She recognises that if a parent cannot discipline their own children then this is not possible for her at school. She uses the community context as a resource in which to construct her professional identity and refuses to give in to the learned helplessness of parents who are afraid to discipline a child. Her values, however, remain in tension with the expectations of parents.

Ngubs' realisations and comments are also illuminating for he finds that the influence of the community is exceptionally strong and it has a negative influence on learners. He talks about the rate of crime as extreme, where students appear to find crime itself aspirational: *"the rate of crime, you know, sometimes you find that some people who are not even educated in this country because of crime. They seem to be successful – a child is looking at that person who is successful who has never been at school"* (SI). Despite trying to live up to the image of a successful authority like a teacher, he is not regarded as a role model by the learners, who find criminals better role models, and who will even say *"I can't be at school because so and so has never been at school, but he is successful and he is rich today"*.

When I probed further about why teachers were not regarded as role models he indicated *"I only teach one learning area, and they cannot look at me as a role model, because I just come for that period and afterwards I leave them"* (SI). Learners, however, spend the *"entire day with the gangsters and they look at them and they see how they succeed and they want to resemble them"* (SI). The professional role and identity of teachers is brought into question here, in the face of other influences teachers are no longer held in high esteem by learners. His professional knowledge and status cannot be used as resources to influence learners any longer. He rejects the understanding that teachers are not role models and attributes learners' rejection of teachers to the minimal time spent with learners as opposed to the long hours spent with gangsters. There is a strong relationship between his professional identity as an authority and his feeling of being seen as ineffective by the learners and community which impacts negatively on his identity (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011).

For Ngubs this is a source of contention for whilst he has to be the one to teach learners respect and other moral values, he is not seen as a role model. He is aware that his positional power is not influential and he cannot make a difference in the lives of learners who view criminality as more prestigious and successful and would thus prefer to “*resemble gangsters than teachers*”. He argues that teachers cannot be blamed for the state of education when community values and school values, as well as teachers’ personal values, are in disjuncture. When parents and grandparents in the school gave up their important role of teaching their children and grandchildren values and morals to the teachers in the school, they in effect made teachers responsible to ensure that these values and morals are taught.

However, Ngubs provides an understanding of the difficulty associated with being positioned in this manner and for him he cannot be held accountable for these values, which are different to his own personal values and beliefs. He cannot make a contribution to the personal, moral and social lives of learners, who view gangsters as role models and who do not value teachers and schooling. Here the normative demands of the community placed on teachers as moral agents create a dilemma for Ngubs. His **external identity** and his **internal identity** are in collision, and he cannot reconcile the two. He therefore cannot follow his cultural norms of guiding learners in the way in which he would like to (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

But for some of the teachers, like Zippo and Evange, if parents cannot impart this to the learners, and if some community values are based on criminal activities, then teachers have to take on the role of doing this, otherwise “*the life of the child would be dead*” (Zippo, SI). Evange (SI) saw his responsibility as future-orientated because:

learners will not only end up being learners. They will become adults, parents and so on. I believe that we cannot teach a boy manhood only when he is married. It beings here at Grade, say, Eight, right now. You are there to protect. This is your sister, you must protect her. If you are able to protect your sister, your family, female friends or classmates or school friend and not abuse them, surely, maybe later on in life, they will realise that is their responsibility to protect women.

Evange’s adherence to patriarchal discourses of gender is influenced by his personal identity as a minister and these discourses prove powerful in shaping his identity. He moves between

traditional understandings of the role of “*boys to protect*” and in keeping with human rights discourses “*not to abuse*”. What this shows is that identity is constantly in a state of becoming, construction, contestations and transformation (Zembylas, 2003).

However, for Sthe and Evange, their personal understandings of morality should not supersede or be in conflict with constitutional and institutional values and parental rights. Here, they felt that they cannot claim sole moral authority. For Sthe, protection of constitutional rights was important, and he felt that he had to be very careful, “*I don’t contravene or do what is contrary to the South African Constitution... although at times it is difficult. So I have to be sensitive to that because you have to respect diversity*” (SI). He also had an **institutional identity** (Gee, 2001) that influenced his teaching, “*you are aware that we are in the institution - the school is governed by its own policies and regulations, it has got its own principles and values that have to be achieved. So my values don’t actually supersede what is expected of me by the prescribed policies and regulations*” (SI). Thus his own values do not carry great weight or hold authority over Constitutional values.

He uses **his institutional identity** to derive a position of authority (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009) to act out his professional and personal identity within the school. He sees his function to create educated and moral citizens who ‘*are balanced.*’ For him, the important part is to create a child who has both educational and moral values, “*so that there we can have a balanced member of society who cherishes his or her family, who values education*” (SI.) He cannot concentrate only on developing the academic values in a learner “*because you would have a very educated society but when it comes to morals, they have got zero morals*” (SI). He sees the teaching of values to learners as his institutional, professional and personal practice.

Sthe and Evange believed that their role is on par with that of the parents for “*it is not only the parents who must teach that but us too*” (Evange, SI). But teachers provide the safety net for parents, because as Sthe notes, teachers are required to intervene: “*children are lacking that at home he does get it here at school*” and “*I involve myself in the activities that are happening here so that I can have a better understanding of the society that I am saying. Even the document says that [pointing to the CAPS documents]*” (SI). Thus, these teachers recognise that they have a role to play but it is one that does not contravene policy and cultural norms. This also serves as an explanation of how teachers negotiate their personal

and professional identity by maintaining, resisting and transforming institutional and societal demands (Fairbanks et al., 2009).

The issue of teenage pregnancy presented a challenge to Ghettoh, whose understanding of sex and pregnancy was influenced largely by her identity as a Christian. Her narrative shows her discontentedness with having an identity forced upon her, and challenged her “**ontological security**” (Woods & Jeffrey, 2002). She tries to reaffirm and hold on to her belief system and her personal sense-of-self becomes fragmented. She feels a sense of disempowerment at her lack of agency in having to deal with the reality of her context. Ghettoh placed a great deal of emphasis on building relationships with learners, often talking about showing learners love and care and support. The issue of pregnancy of a fourteen year old learner presented itself as an ethical moral dilemma for her, and made her question the investment that she puts into her work. She felt comfortable taking on the roles that:

I'm a teacher, I'm a mother I'm the social worker, but I'm not the midwifery... now we have got the policy which said if a child is pregnant we have to take care of her. So I cannot say, 'you move out of my class.' I have to look after her. I don't feel good and that what I'm saying. I'm not trained as a midwife so I don't know when she's going to get in labour so what must I do. So I have to leave all the kids and look after this one because she was enjoying herself. I think she must stay at home and then come when she is ready. Yes, yes (SI).

Ghettoh's **assigned social identity**, or as she describes it, “*what the government needs*” is in tension with her own moral standards. She attempts to resolve the dilemma she faces in the manner in which she positions herself in relation to the learner. The issue creates a sense of inadequacy and **vulnerability** for her, because whilst she can carry out the roles of mother, teacher and social worker, the externally imposed role of midwife causes her to be resentful of having to look after a learner who ‘*was enjoying herself*’ and had gotten pregnant. She detaches herself from this new identity, and laments that she is not trained and is not comfortable with what the government needs (Wood & Jeffrey, 2002). She commented that she is forced “*to look after her. I don't feel good*”. Being forced ‘to look after her’ means that she does not invest herself completely in this assigned identity. Her loss of control and power over her job causes her to feel unsettled, because she complies mostly “*because the policy says we have to take care of her*”. Here, she does not voice her dissent against the

government for forcing her to take on these roles, but against the learner who got pregnant, and “*who was enjoying herself*.”

But what is agonising and unfair for Ghettoh, is the fact that she has to leave “*all the kids and look after this one*” (SI). Ghettoh’s own moral stance, underpinned by her strong Christian background, is used to justify and make sense of her reactions and actions towards the particular learner, despite the fact that this is in disagreement with the system she serves. It is also the manner in which she shows some resistance against government needs which go against her own moral compass and philosophical beliefs and values. She feels a sense of alienation from her own values and practices as a Christian and as a professional, and could not reconcile her identity with that of the expectations of the government. Instead she strategically complies albeit with a sense of discontent in an effort to re-align her own personal value system.

5.8 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I examined teachers’ identity to answer my research question, where analysis revealed the importance of historical personal values in the construction of personal and professional identities. It revealed that teachers were influenced by their own experiences of inequality and oppression that forged their identities for the present. In this, they situated their need to be responsive to learners and to make a difference in the lives of their learners. Teachers used their past experiences as moral resources that shaped their practice and identities. Narratives revealed that teachers were self-reflective of their identities and they constantly negotiated their personal values, professional identity and wider societal discourse and demands in order to create and re-create a sense of themselves. Thus, teaching was also situated as an intensely moral and ethical practice.

Religion served as an organising principle of teachers’ actions that created “durable dispositions” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 13). Growing up and being exposed to Christianity were the building blocks for the kinds of relationships that they developed with learners. Their Christian identity enabled them to understand their context and to be responsive to it in keeping with their position as stewards of God. Their self-knowledge enabled teachers to practise social justice and equity in self-affirming ways, and in the process, reinforced the dominance of Christianity within the schooling context. However, they were faced with various ethical dilemmas that showed the various positions that teachers take up in

negotiating these dilemmas. Not only did teachers negotiate contextual dilemmas, but they had to negotiate their personal and professional identities as determined by Christianity, policy and community expectations. In this, the complexity of identity negotiation was revealed, and often, teachers' identities were an ongoing, dynamic process of (re)negotiation (Flores & Day, 2006).

Teachers' deep knowledge of their learners and the context also constructed particular positions that teachers were required to negotiate. Teachers had to take up various positions in being responsive to learners' needs, like being an all-rounder, supportive teacher and being responsible for the moral socialisation of learners. The caring teacher was seen as extremely crucial to being responsive to learners' high level of needs. Their critical care response was to try to alleviate the extreme trauma that learners experienced. Being caring also meant that they had to support their learners financially, emotionally, pastorally and to take on various roles like parent, provider and socialising agent of moral values. This positioned the caring relationship or ethic of care, as characterised by high quality relationship, to support learners academically and personally. However, this proved difficult to maintain and sustain, showing the complexity of negotiating contexts with such massive inequality. Teachers had to negotiate and make sense of their environment, where learners themselves did not regard teachers as role models. In such situations, teachers expressed vulnerability, and where living up to the assigned personal and social roles evident in educational policy, institutional demands and community context was difficult. But teachers' Christian and personal identity continued to influence and determine their practices, and resulted in the internalised belief that they would be required to persist, despite the emotional cost to them. Having to constantly negotiate and re-negotiate these various roles, expectations and demands results in fragmented, unstable identities.

In the next chapter, I explore in detail the uncertainty and complexity that surrounds teachers' practices of care and responsibility and the emotional labour that is involved in being responsive.

Chapter Six: The Allegory of Responsibility and Care

6.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter presented the findings related to the complexity of teachers' identities and the different positions, influences and experiences in their work towards equity and social justice. It focused on teachers being responsive to the personal and pastoral needs of learners. In this chapter, I continue and delve more deeply into the ethic of care, but present the analysis and discussion related to the complexity that surrounds teachers' practices of responsibility and care in meeting the educational demands of teaching and ensuring the academic success of learners. Thus, the emphasis is on the academic needs of the learners. Firstly, I analyse the uncertainty and unpredictability that is inherent in teachers' responsibility towards the academic success of learners. Thereafter, I inquire more deeply into the emotional experiences that teachers encounter in their daily negotiations with learners. In doing this, I highlight how teachers position themselves, as well as how they are positioned by their contextual demands. What the data reveals is that teachers are involved in complex negotiations that challenge their ability to be responsible to and for learners. Finally, I analyse three constellations of meaning in relation to the emotional experiences; namely, burnout, internal disquiet, and demoralisation. In particular, the struggles, tension and contradictions of meeting responsibility and accountability demands are highlighted, and I detail the struggles and difficulty that surrounds the practice of responsibility and care and teachers' search for meaning.

This chapter addresses the following research question: what are the struggles, tensions and contradictions that surround teachers' practices of responsibility and care?

6.2 The uncertainty of the ethic of responsibility: *"It is like they are doing it because their parents instructed them to come to school."*

In trying to delve into the complexity of teaching, I needed to appreciate how education is understood, spoken about and practised by teachers and, in relation to this, by learners. Teachers practised in an environment of **compounded disadvantage** (Kenway, 2013), where being responsive to both the environment and learners needs were complex and uncertain. Compounded disadvantage for Kenway (2013) is one where insurmountable difference and inequality are stark reminders of the reason why uncertainty, unpredictability and complexity are intrinsic to marginalised communities. For her, such environments are educationally, socially, culturally and materially different and often social injustice and inequity prevails,

reinforcing social division (Kenway, 2013). Whilst teachers are sensitive to this environment, their actions and responses to the educational demands from learners, parents and policy are complex, contradictory, dilemmatic (Fransson & Grannäs, 2013) and varied, not fitting into clearly devised and articulated strategies. The ethic of responsibility is inherent and heightened in this teaching context, and is reinforced by teachers' own personal value systems that are deeply ingrained and embodied. This learned ethic resulted in an obligation to ensure learners' academic success.

But the structural limitations of poverty, learner demotivation and disinterest, a lack of resources and constant curriculum changes continued to pose barriers to teachers' provision of quality education. The concepts of uncertainty, unpredictability and complexity are positioned in this section as a central organising principle, where teachers' practices, decision-making and beliefs around responsibility are erratic, and sometimes elusive (Fenwick, 2009). Teachers were obliged to constantly adapt and learn about their environment, themselves and their practices, and their responses to the environment must be acknowledged as emergent and evolving. This realisation and understanding informed and prescribed the pedagogical decision-making of teachers, as well as their priorities, desires and dreams for what they attempt to achieve.

What emerged from the data is the **ethic of responsibility and care** that is both **constraining** and **responsive** for teachers. From the narratives, this ethic is used as a **discursive resource** (Kornberger & Brown, 2007) by teachers to position themselves in varying ways that make sense to them and their practice. As previously stated in Chapter Five, the ethic of care was based on the assurance of high quality relationships that are both personal and academic. In this section, I focus only on teachers' attempts to respond to the academic needs of learners. I extend the concept to include Fenwick's (2009) understanding of responsibility. Fenwick (2009) uses complexity science to forward an understanding of responsibility as a contested and problematic discourse, because of the concepts central to responsibility i.e. agency, morality and intentionality. Thus, in focusing on these concepts of agency, morality and intentionality, the complexity, unpredictability and uncertainty of teachers' practices are made more acute. Fenwick (2009) also incorporates Levinas and Derrida's understandings of responsibility as an act that is constantly in the process of becoming in human relationships. This enables more complex interpretation of the **ethico-political dimension** inherent in teachers' practice that is both uncertain and perplexing (Fenwick, 2009, p. 116).

What is a unifying feature that lends coherence and gives purpose and meaning to their teaching is their understanding of learners as their “*priority*” and their “*core business is teaching and learning. That is our core business*” (Sthe, FI). In disadvantaged contexts, these teachers positioned themselves as being responsible for the future of their learners. However, they were ambivalent about learners’ future success, given their understanding of the environment, where some teachers believed learners can achieve success and others disagreeing based on the limitations of the context. They were also adamant that education could ameliorate the social inequality that learners encountered daily. Their work was thus inherently moral, for it provided them with the means to realise this social goal. All the teachers believed that learners had the potential to be successful in the future and in the first interview they indicated that learners could be “*presidents (Evange), future teachers (Zippo), geniuses, doctors, authors (Ngubs), achieving in life (B.V)*”.

Evange and Ghettoh’s poignant understanding of the daily struggle that learners encounter just trying to reach school each day is indicative of the value placed on education by learners:

Ghettoh: Yes they come to school because they come every day on empty stomach. Having no full uniform but they are not afraid that others will look at them. Some come with takkies instead of the school shoes so it means that they are valuing education (FI)

Evange: Most of the learners, they have got nobody at home... there is nobody there to motivate him: ‘have you done your homework? Have you washed your socks? Have you ironed?’... So it must be done at school (FI).

In the second interview, Evange spoke about “*learners travelling miles and miles to school from home to school and then back again*”. These teachers see such learners as resilient, motivated and filled with the hope to transcend their gruelling living conditions. These understandings, coupled with the complex social problems discussed in Chapter Five, provide the moral imperatives of obligation and responsibility that teachers need to shoulder to help learners overcome and be successful. It is a fundamental recognition of teachers that the “*stakes involved in schooling are extremely high*” (Haberman, 1995a, p. 1), and that it is worth pursuing in order for learners to have options and decent futures. However, the ability to fulfil this **obligation and responsibility** and uphold their “**complexified education**

vision” (Fenwick, 2009, p. 112) underpinned by social justice and equity was difficult to achieve. Responding to learners needs, however, was more complex in practice, and often teachers were not able to achieve their desired academic outcomes and expectations.

Teaching in contexts influenced by poor nutrition, neglect, abuse, and depraved living conditions required extreme resilience and emotional intelligence, which, for teachers, was difficult to maintain, and where they questioned their purpose and role in education. One of the first issues that called their sense of responsibility into question was interpreting how education was valued by learners and parents. The environment and a lack of parental involvement presented teachers with a sense of uncertainty as to how to respond, and where to position themselves in helping the learners academically. For the teachers, the value of education was poorly understood, and sometimes absent in the community. They believed in varying degrees that the learners understood and valued education, but that this was dependent on parents input and interest. Whilst Sthe acknowledges that parents do show learners the importance of education, for many parents, “*sending a child to school is like getting rid of them*” (SI). Whilst some learners may understand the importance of being educated, they “*lack that support back at home which they find it difficult when they come to school, because there is no one trying to influence them*” (Joel, FI). For Joel and Sthe, parents are crucial partners in education, but for them, parents devalue education. This devaluing of education for B.V. impacted on the future of learners, because, for her:

...very few of them will become successful or will have successful careers. Looking at the background some of the parents always complain about not affording to take children to school. Very few of them will go to universities. Sixty percent of them (will go) nowhere. The background is affecting them a lot... and the things that are happening in the community they do not encourage them to become successful people (FI).

However, Zippo and Ngubs questioned whether learners themselves valued education, and whether in fact they thought differently to the way in which their parents and community members did. Zippo was unwavering in her belief that her learners do not value education. She makes a comparison with her own son, who attends an ex-model C school, with that of her learners, and finds that

sometimes you push them they don't understand. Why? You know I do have a son who is doing Grade Six, but if I compare him with these... you know, I don't push my son to do homework. I haven't been called to come to school for wrong doing. But here if I compare! Aay no! no! They don't know the value of it. It is like they are doing it because their parents instructed them to come to school (FI).

Here, her belief is that learners have choices available to them and they have chosen not to value their education and schooling. All she requires from the learners is to be motivated and interested, even if it is in the form of completing homework. Just that small gesture of motivation and interest are the resources she needs to continue teaching learners without having to “push” them. Instead, she is confronted with learners who only come to school because they have been “instructed” to do so by the parents. This is frustrating for her, for not only must she deal with disinterested learners, but also parent disinterest because, as she puts it, “*there is no one is talking about it from home... so they don't get this information from the parents' side*” (FI). Thus, in her view, teachers contend with a lack of learner motivation, and a schooling context that does not place sufficient importance on education.

Ngub's concern highlights the social and educational disadvantage that counters efforts to raise the achievement levels of learners, reinforcing the **performance inequality** (Kenway, 2013) that these teachers face. Ngubs shares her views:

You see sometimes, they are discouraged by the fact that there is high rate of unemployment in the country, and there are people out there who have already acquired higher education, but they are not employed. That one alone discourages them, and there are other contributing factors like, like the family, maybe there is no one working and they are depending on gogo's [grandmother's] pension (FI).

This is a stark reminder of the illusion that surrounds capitalism, which fosters aspirations beyond what is achievable for those that face social class constraints. The community, parents and learners have become aware that social upward mobility is not guaranteed through education. Instead, the vast majority of learners are excluded from participating in the economy, due to the high unemployment rate that continues to stratify South African

society, resulting in learners being discouraged and questioning the value of education. Here, Ngubs' concern is recognising that wider societal inequality impacts on what is possible in the classroom, leading to learners questioning the intentions behind education. Why should they be educated, when education does not provide them with employment that will help them transcend their poverty? Ngubs also understands the disempowering effects of classism, and unemployment, where all that families can do is "*depend on Gogo's [grandmother's] pension.*" So teachers have to contend with the devaluing of education, lack of parental involvement, learners' demotivation, as well as structural impediments that make teaching more difficult and which highlight teachers' responsibility as both **uncertain** and unpredictable.

Thus, teachers work within an environment that is complex and it is difficult for them to assist in realising these **imagined futures** (Fenwick, 2009). How is it possible for teachers to realise the imagined future of successful learners when the community itself did not engender "*successful people*" (B.V., SI); where the value of education is questioned with learners being coerced by parents to attend schools and where higher education does not guarantee success and leads to demotivation on the part of all stakeholders. Haberman (2005) maintains that this lack of learner motivation has become one of the reasons why teachers experience stress, and is a precursor to burnout. There is also the realisation that structural inequities persist to make this imagined future difficult to achieve. Often, the imagined futures of learners and learning are truncated, and teachers' notions of social justice and equity are lost, and are difficult to attain. In such an environment, the crucial connection between teachers and learners begins to go astray. The **disconnect** strikes at the very heart of what teachers believe their role and purpose to be.

But despite these impediments, teachers continued to work towards encouraging and motivating learners and used their ethical knowledge to respond to learners and the environment (Fenwick, 2009). For Ngubs, prioritising learning and helping learners to have vision was to teach them the "*power of imagining things... try to encourage them to visual these things*" (FI). This kind of visioning was to show learners that all things were possible despite their adverse living conditions, and he used his own home circumstances to do this: "*looking at my family position and financial situation, I don't think I may continue with education and become someone. But you tell them your history, I was born from this type of a family, we struggled from 'this and that', and therefore, that doesn't mean you must be*

discouraged” (FI). Ngubs, like most teachers, found motivational props or tools to give his learners a sense of purpose, but that keeps them locked into **nurturance pedagogies** (Perumal, 2014, p.13) that ensures that they are responsible for learners’ pastoral and academic success. For Perumal (2014) teachers are then obligated to ensure that they make a difference in the lives of learners. But this is what is required for them to survive, and to continue teaching. This shows teachers’ commitment to learning as well as a commitment to social justice and equity.

For the teachers in the study, the mitigating factor to learners (de)valuing education stemmed from the context in which learners lived which teachers found difficult to negotiate and resulted in feelings of frustration. This placed enormous responsibility on them to compensate for what was lacking in their environment. The teachers’ narratives evident here point not only to the complexity of navigating their practices, but also the degree to which they were overwhelmed in working towards equity and social justice. The impediments to their effective practice are vast. The question becomes how do teachers’ continue to motivate and inspire learners when the community, parental and learner values are in opposition to the goals of education and the school? How do teachers realise a seemingly elusive goal? In calling for teachers to adopt a dialectical stance with one eye fixed firmly on the students and one on the context, the almost impossible nature of the call is emphasised (Ayers, 2009).

6.3 The Emotional Demands of Care and Responsibility: “*So it is a blessing and a curse to be a teacher.*”

Nias (1996), Zembylas (2003), Isenbarger and Zembylas (2006), O’Connor (2008) and Wrench and Garret (2012) all indicate that emotions are at the heart of teaching, and that understanding this emotional process is vital to the professional identity of teachers. The emotional experiences of the teachers in this study were centred on their understanding and experiences of pedagogical care and responsibility. Despite arduous working conditions, negative perceptions of education by parents and learners and the associated emotional drain, teachers continued to set academic goals and expectations of both themselves and their learners. This decision was both a personal, intentional choice, although as discussed, largely determined by their religious philosophy about their moral responsibility (Beasley & Bacchi, 2005); but also it was an expectation from various sources within the schooling context. They felt the desire to provide learners with the necessary knowledge to enable them to be

successful in high school and in the world. But learners' academic success was constrained by what was possible in the context.

For Zembylas (2003, p. 216) emotions and **emotionality** are not only personal or psychological qualities but are also social and political constructions that influence teachers' work lives. Nias (1996) indicates that there are reasons why teachers invest their emotions in learners. I have found that the teachers used their personal identities to inform their professional practice (Nias, 1996). In such instances the classroom and schooling context became a space of intense feeling, with teachers' emotions moving between negative and positive emotions. However, with intense pressure and feelings of vulnerability, teaching resembles an "emotionally dangerous occupation" (Connell, 1985, p. 121), where, in the pedagogic balancing act, teachers try to find a sense of equilibrium and satisfaction (Nias, 2002). As stated previously, teachers viewed their work as inherently moral, where it provided them with purpose and enabled them to engage in practices that they believed served their vulnerable learners well. But these practices resulted in many dilemmas, contradictions and tensions that continued to construct an environment of uncertainty. Here, in my view, identity refers to the means by which individuals reflexively and emotionally negotiate their own identity. Emotions define and inform identity in the process of becoming.

I now look at how teachers in the study negotiate their emotions in caring for and being responsible for and about their learners. This understanding positioned learners as central to the teachers' teaching lives. The schooling context aided the formation of a particular kind of caring and responsible teacher, but this subject positioning was both a "*blessing and a curse*" (Ngub's, FI) and involved **emotional labour** (Zembylas, 2003). Teachers tended to be consumed with developing and maintaining a particular kind of relationship with learners, but this was a difficult task, as it became their personal responsibility to ensure academic success. This, in turn, had implications for their pedagogical decision-making and attempts to provide pedagogical justice to learners. Taking care of the academic needs of the learners was central to their professional identity. The storying of the teachers selves show how their identities as caring, responsible teachers are constantly constructed and reconstructed within their discursive environments (Zembylas, 2003). Teachers did not express their inability to be successful when helping learners on a personal and pastoral level, but this occurred repeatedly when discussing learners' academic success.

Evange and Ghettoh's understandings resemble 'hard caring', which emphasises both the pastoral needs of learners but balances this against their academic needs. Evange indicated:

if we talk about the physical care of a learner on torn shoes. Maybe you will take a R70-00 and buy the shoes and so on, but that would in no way contribute to them knowing maths. But if you talk about care and like feeding them then giving them the necessary nutrient, that means for me ensuring that you are in class, they are in class, they are safe, they are learning and you are teaching. In that teaching learning is taking place. So I would categorise caring for them in two things and I always try to incorporate the two – so it is caring for the fact that they have good conceptual knowledge of maths – good concepts and then caring for them too but learning must take place and their well-being (SI).

This kind of **hard caring** emphasises the academic skills necessary for learners to be successful, but Evange also places the responsibility on himself as a teacher to always be prepared, to be in the classroom on time and teaching to the best of his ability. In this way, learners can be secure in the knowledge that he has done enough to provide them with the necessary and important facets of mathematics. Whilst he recognises that pastoral care is important, for him, caring is about ensuring their academic needs are met, and are more important for him.

Ghettoh talked about being consumed with thinking about learners and the school to the exclusion of everything else like family and friends: *“even if I am out of the school I am always thinking: ‘oh what can I do for my school?’ That’s it. It is demanding to be in this school but I am enjoying it [...] when I am in the premises, everything goes off. I am always busy I am always occupied [...] I give most of my time for my job”* (FI). Here, Ghettoh establishes a norm of caring that is self-sacrificing and is in keeping with her personal Christian values. Her narrative reinforces the point that the caring and responsible teacher must sacrifice her own interests and well-being in order to be regarded as a legitimate, selfless teacher, who has the best interests of the learner at heart. She has an ethical investment in her career.

These understandings and beliefs forced teachers to prioritise factors that helped them to see clear direction of action. This action, however, was filled with uncertainty and tension and

was precariously negotiated within interaction. This meant having their own expectations and goals about their practice. The teachers commented as follows:

B.V.: *You know, as we are teaching different learners. Yes, I want to achieve my outcomes and I want to ensure that they all pass at the end. Even if it the beginning of the year, I don't look there, I look to the front. That, at the end of the year they must all pass my subject; and if there are those who are under-achieving, then I make sure that I help them so that my goal is achieved. So that I make sure that at the end they come out of that grade knowing what they have learned, and going to the next grade being able to be taught. If the child is not developed in this grade, it is going to be a problem in the next grade. Then I try to help them there (FI).*

Ghettoh: *I do thorough preparation. I go an extra mile - look for the information for those learners that are struggling and sometimes sitting behind with them. Fortunate, we have those reading periods in the morning. So I take those learners that are failing to read. Like today, I was doing with them step-by-step helping them. Every single day, my learners are learning. If they can't, then I must help (FI).*

Sthe: *There are quite a number of goals looking at the community that we are teaching. That is to see my learners here self-sustained; self-reliant because in my personal view, South Africa is not a place where people will be job seekers, it will be about people who will be the job creators. So, to achieve that, my goal will be to try and create learners who are critical in their thinking (SI).*

Ngubs: *Over the past years, I have been trying to work very hard. Doing a lot in terms of making sure that I get informed before I come into the classroom, making sure that I equip myself so that if a learner maybe asks a question then you don't find yourself in trouble. That is one of the most important things. Plan your work. Those are the goals that you set yourself (FI).*

Joel: *Seeing your children achieving good results or understanding what I have actually taught them and being able to use that in their daily life. My goal to help them every day (FI).*

The pedagogy of academic care espoused by the teachers focused on the provision of successful learning outcomes. To do this requires a sense of moral visioning. For them, there is an ultimate goal, and that is success for learners. This visioning or goal-setting is used as a litmus test for justice (Books & Ndlalane, 2011) and a way of assessing their own practice. But teachers are positioned and position themselves in these narratives. They see themselves as those who are the providers of success, and to do this they meet all the requirements for successful teaching, as evident in the excerpts above.

Teachers' understanding provides a deep understanding of macro-issues that impact on what is achievable for learners that is indicative of a critical understanding of social justice and equity. For Ngubs, the sense of responsibility was a heavy load to carry, and despite the solidarity and empathy (Nieto, 2006) that he shares with learners that ensures that he is always prepared and ready for his learners, teaching is also "*a blessing and a curse*" (FI). Sthe, on the other hand, recognises that he has to prepare learners to be "*self-sustained and self-reliant*" (SI), because learners need to become job-creators and not job-seekers. This is because he sees South Africa as an unequal society that fails to provide employment for the majority of people. But in saying this, he also places extreme pressure on himself to prepare learners to be job-creators. He takes on the responsibility of having to provide what our government has failed to do, namely, to ensure his learners are able to find employment. But Sthe believes that his teaching must fulfil this obligation and he must find ways to live up to a "**vision of excellence**" for himself (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003, p. 362). This is his way of giving visibility to what he believes will "produce alternative realities" for his learners and so challenge inequality (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003, p. 341).

These moral and ethical imperatives provide teachers with a sense of purpose and are a source of meaning. Also glaring are the ways in which teachers position themselves in order to respond to their own personal goals of ensuring all their learners pass, and to meet their professional goals of being thoroughly prepared, taking care of the different learning abilities, often remaining after school and during breaks to help learners, and working with them to ensure that learning occurs every single day towards the ultimate goal of effective self-reliance. Although their actions can be seen as selfless to some extent, there is an element of reciprocity here; for, in helping learners, they gain a sense that they are making a difference, and so feel a sense of achievement (Nieto, 2006).

6.4 Dilemmatic positioning of the caring and responsible teacher: “So we don’t have to beg a child to come to school.”

Sthe, as illustrated above, was particularly focused on ensuring learners were academically prepared. However, his experience of pedagogic caring and responsibility relates to the difficulty and frustration that arises when the **obligation** to care and be responsible becomes extreme, and where he feels that he is being taken advantage of by learners. He related an incident of a truant learner, noting that “*he doesn’t feel like coming to school*” (SI). For him, caring and sympathising meant having to investigate the barriers in the schooling and classroom context that impacted negatively on the learner’s motivation to attend school. However, being caring and sympathetic to learners often resulted in the abuse of teachers’ efforts, because learners are “*sometimes deceitful*” (SI). For Sthe, learners should not be cajoled into attending school when:

...if you go back to our South African Constitution, school attendance is compulsory up until the age of fifteen... so we don’t have to beg a child to come to school. A child has to come to school. It is compulsory... we might sympathise with them only to find that they lose. We need to care, yet at the same time, to deliver what is expected in that particular grade. So, this has to go together. The child has to be willing, because if the child is not willing, there is nothing we can do (SI).

Sthe provides insight into the tension that arises when trying to be both responsible for learning outcomes, and caring about the well-being of learners. Sthe makes a choice that reveals his struggles to make fair, morally just decisions about his responsibility to care. For him, truancy and unwillingness on the part of the learners is in conflict with what he believes is his task as a good teacher, and goes against his understandings of equity and social justice. He indicates, “*I even said I am wasting my time here because you are one, leaving about forty-two learners in the class attending to this child. Although it is important, but look at how much loss we are doing when we are attending to this one*” (SI). He accepts that all learners’ needs must be taken care of, but not at the expense of the majority of learners, especially when the learner has revealed personal lack of interest in school. What is also important in this narrative is the way in which learners are positioned. Sthe sees learners as having the power to make informed decisions, and this decision by the learner Sthe finds unproductive. This places Sthe in a quandary or disequilibrium for he is uncertain of how to

respond to the learner. In this case, the ethic of care and the ethic of responsibility seem to be on opposite ends of the same continuum, complexifying ethical decision-making.

Sthe's uncertainty stems from several understandings. Firstly, Sthe is uncertain about why the learner does not value schooling, but he is also aware that the schooling and environmental context do not engender success, and do not provide the motivation to be successful. Secondly, the uncertainty of how to respond to a learner who cannot see and appreciate his and other teachers' effort to provide him/her with the skills to be job creators and disrupt the poverty cycle. Thirdly, his understanding that he has to respond in more appeasing ways to motivate the learner into attending schooling but this would in effect mean that his is enabling behaviour that goes against his own personal values. These feelings frustrate his sense of efficacy.

This is contrary to his caring, responsible and supportive role and shows the complexity surrounding the **face-to-face encounter** that Levinas (1969) argues for. It shows the **endless responsibility** to the "other" but he is no longer the '**servant**' because he questions the learner's motives which also impact on his emotions where he feels vulnerable and uncertain (Levinas, 1989, p. 83). It is no longer a passive relationship and Sthe begins to make choices. What this encounter also brings into question is the dilemma of making a choice when confronted with the competing demands of the other learners or the -'**other**' "**Other**" (Levinas, 1969). Sthe recognises that when other learners' needs enter into the relationship then their needs have the potential to be sacrificed. He makes a choice and he severs the relationship with the uncooperative learner whose needs no longer take precedence. He makes the decision using his own positional authority in order to respond justly, ethically and appropriately. Sthe's reflexivity shows that, at times, ethics can be compromised and the pathways to ethical reasoning and behaviour may involve significant or sustained ambiguities and contradictions (Biesta, 2003). He is **ethically accountable** not only to a single learner, but to the others as well, showing that there is a potentially contradictory limit to responsibility. Important in this is the extent of responsibility that teachers ought to carry towards resistant learners. Sthe shows his own understanding of how to act out his own sense of good teaching, based on his own value system. He ultimately makes the pedagogical decision that the majority of learners needs' are of primary importance to him.

For Sthe, the motivation and value of education must be inculcated at home. What Sthe does is position the act of caring and responsibility in such a way where caring is firstly about the academic needs of learners, but this kind of caring cannot be given if learners and parents don't play a part in valuing education in particular and important ways. Responsibility is also understood in a particular way. He would assume responsibility if a child's right to education was compromised because of something he or the school has done and is prepared to "*work my own time, not tuition time*, for problems "*created by myself*" or if the problem has "*started from the school*" (SI). For him, however, the learner also needs to take responsibility of his own learning, in proportion to his right to learn. Both parents and learners need to acknowledge that the responsibility for attendance lies in the domain of the home, but Sthe finds it difficult to completely dispose of this responsibility obligation.

Learners and parents also need to care about education and learning. This kind of caring is similar to the kind of caring that Noddings (1990) believes is **reciprocal**, but according to Garza (2009) context determines the extent to which caring is in fact reciprocal. Here, the learner does not care in the same manner than Sthe does and the learner according to Sthe does not perceive his actions to be caring. But for Sthe, if caring for the academic needs are not met by the school or the teacher, he feels that he remains culpable. He positions the school, teachers, learners and parents as being interdependent on each other in order for the academic needs of learners to be met. He also shows the deep commitment to the learners and their academic learning, where he expresses that he is prepared to "*work my own time, not tuition time, to work on those problems*" (SI). Present also is the intense sense of blame and responsibility that he places on his shoulders in the belief that he alone is responsible for academic success and failure. All he requires from learners is to be 'willing' to attend school. His experiences, however, also point to the disadvantages that are felt by him when caring for the emotional and social wellbeing of the learner, takes precedence over academic wellbeing. There needs to be clear demarcation of the parameters of care and responsibility so that learners and teachers are not disempowered in this act of caring and responsibility, leading to feelings of vulnerability, helplessness and possible inefficacy (Kelchtermans, 2005).

For him, the fact that the parent has come to school indicates that the parent has failed, and is helpless, and thus he has to fulfil this role that normally a parent should. But the pressure to fulfil different roles comes not only from parents, but is also internal to him, bearing out a struggle for recognition, to re-insert and re-establish the moral appreciation of the work that

he fulfils as a teacher. This appears to be important to his own personal value system of what role he has to take on as a teacher (Kelchterman, 2005). Moreover, it shows the uncertainty around teaching, for on a daily basis, teachers are expected to respond to learners and parents in a variety of ways that perplex them.

6.5 Teachers' Responsibility to be Knowledge Providers and Saviors: *"It is a disaster waiting to happen."*

In attempting to be responsive to all these proclivities, teachers position themselves as knowledge providers and saviours, with learners being their paramount concern. Given what they know about the learners, and what they are expected to do, the pressure to constantly work and provide for learners is examined. Sthe was insistent that if teachers did not provide learners with good content and academic skills, then this amounts to *"a disaster waiting to happen"* (SI). Teachers' socially critical perspectives show reflection and engagement with their educational goals and priorities. It also shows that taking on this role came at great emotional cost, for they struggle to provide learners with knowledge and could not alleviate the alienation and marginalisation that learners experience. The following comments are revealing of teacher's thoughts on this:

Ghettoh: *I don't think they can carry on learning to their satisfaction. They won't pass they will maybe have dropout and go and live in the streets* (FI).

Ngubs: *You must realise for us Africans, we don't have facilities around here. So as a teacher, you become the sole source of information and therefore you ought to be very much prepared. Definitely, (they) will suffer because you are the only person that they depend upon. Even these young ones, they don't realise that they are suffering, but if you have your conscience working properly, then you know that you are destroying their future* (FI).

Teachers needed to constantly assess themselves and *"see if they are still relevant to their learners... in order to avert the disaster waiting to happen"* (Sthe, SI). Evange meanwhile believes that in order to produce quality, then teachers themselves needed to offer quality: *"so you want to produce quality candidates, because if the teacher is not quality, obviously the product there would be even"* [shrugs]. For him it would be a 'shame' if teachers failed to be a *"quality candidates because those learners would be robbed, really. They would be*

disadvantaged, and they would not know it, because the teacher does not know or care” (SI). Both Zippo and B.V. believed that failing to be adequately skilled and lacking good content knowledge could result in learners being unable to successfully negotiate the curriculum and to pass successfully. For B.V. quality education was synonymous with critical thinking, and this is a skill that learners must be taught so that they do not “*reproduce which is not good*”. Ngubs constructed learners as passive, lacking in critical capacity and dependent on him through an understanding of the fraught context, knowing ethically that they had few alternatives upon which to draw and that he was the sole source of information for them. For him, his role of knowledge provider was made all the more crucial, because “*even these young ones they don’t realise that they are suffering then you know that you are destroying their future*” (SI).

As mentioned previously, for Ngubs, not only must he be the knowledge provider, but he must also be their saviour, given his greater amount of experience. In doing this, he gains a sense of control over what the intentions behind his practice are, and this enables him to make decisions and take appropriate action in response to learners who are dependent on him. This also reinforces the interpretive responsibility of teachers, given that learners themselves do not perceive their own suffering. However, in such demanding contexts, I argue, the ability to manoeuvre in creative ways is constrained, and teachers constantly navigate and negotiate their contexts to make decisions that make sense. Whilst Ngubs believed that learners do not have the critical ability to realise and understand the problems and issues that they face, he still takes the responsibility to ensure that they are not disempowered by their lack of knowledge.

6.6 The difficulty in accessing the moral rewards of teaching: “*Their failures and strengths depend on how I do things*”.

Teachers recognise the contribution that they make to the lives of learners. This recognition is a personal and professional necessity. However, being solely responsible for African learners’ academic, physical and emotional outcomes is daunting and overwhelming. The responsibility that they have chosen to shoulder underpinned by their personal, religious and contextual influences place extreme demands on them. The high expectations teachers have of themselves are often met, as a result of their heightened sense of accountability as educators. This is a double-edged sword that is evident in the teachers’ narratives. The ethic of responsibility has in effect constructed learners as passive and dependent on teachers who

then experience emotional upheaval when they are unable to help learners who need them so much.

The question arises as to what happens when the **moral rewards** implicit in teaching are no longer available (Santoro, 2011). For Santoro (2011) moral rewards are “internal to the practice of teaching rather than the possession of individual teachers” (Santoro, 2011, p. 3). She explains that these rewards are unlimited resources that teachers are able to access in the carrying out of their professional roles and duties, and are not an individual possession. In her study, Santoro (2011) makes a distinction between **demoralisation** and **burnout**. For her, demoralisation is a political recognition of systemic or structural constraints that are oppressive. On the other hand, burnout is experienced when teachers experience feelings of **unhappiness, discontent and frustration**, and where personal resources are no longer enough to sustain them. In such cases, teachers feel that there are no moral rewards available for them to access that would give them a sense of purpose and fulfilment. Below, I present narratives that are illustrative of teachers teetering on the brink of **disequilibrium, demoralisation and burnout**.

Zippo, Ghettoh and Sthe expressed real concerns about the academic achievement of their learners. They worried about why they were not able to achieve any measure of success and took personal responsibility for this, *“I can never regard myself as a good teacher based on the results that are obtained by my learners you see. Since mathematics is still a problem it means we are not doing enough. I cannot personally put the blame on the learners”* (Sthe, SI). This failure to achieve the required outcomes resulted in the teachers questioning their own abilities. Zippo, for example, indicated:

seems as if you have failed to be a good teacher. When you give them a task and you see that most of them have failed you see that there is something wrong with me... when I see learners and [...] they have failed that is where I feel like no I am not a good teacher and I just see myself as a failure (SI).

This sense of being a failure leaves her feeling *“exhausted, not because you are tired, but because of the challenges you had at school during that day.”* But despite this, she continues to work towards this seemingly elusive goal: *“in fact I will try up to the last one – the last moment”* (SI). Ghettoh also worried, because for her, she *“plans but sometimes I don’t attain*

the standard that I wanted [...] I'm feeling so bad" (SI). Here teachers have both **active and reflective dimensions** to their identity (O'Connor, 2008, p.118). They reflect on the results of their work, and for them it is about personal accountability to their professional roles and so they act on their reflections. The emotions expressed regarding their failures become a personal reflection of not being good enough as a teacher. Their personal investment in teaching is questioned. It also shows how teachers' emotions guide the formation of their identities as failures.

However, despite their lack of success and feeling of failure, teachers are also **resilient**, and draw on their **personal reserves**, to *"try up to the last one – the last moment"* (Zippo, SI). Ghetto suggested seeking advice from other colleagues. Keeping in mind both their personal and Christian values, a great deal of pressure seems to gather for these teachers to continue to work hard at the risk of their emotional well-being: *"I feel that what makes me to work hard. It's because I know I'm accountable and you know responsible for learners whether they become. Their failures and strengths depend on how I do things"* (Zippo, SI). For the teacher to feel responsible and accountable on a very personal level is a motivating factor, but it also shows signs of **self-recrimination** and **self-blame** that are detrimental to a person's emotional health reminiscent of Connell's (1985, p.121) understanding that teaching is an "emotionally dangerous occupation".

But what is also important in the teachers' comments of personal responsibility and accountability is a lack of understanding of the **structural and cultural constraints** that have rendered them impotent and helpless. The failure on their part to recognise that their feelings of self-blame and vulnerability come from externally-imposed factors, and not from internal responses. For Santoro (2011) this points to the teachers' inability to recognise the structural impediments to their practice and their understanding about teaching has become **politicised**. But what this does is lock teachers in a stranglehold of accountability and responsibility that is unreasonable and unattainable. Ghetto does critically reflect on the role of the government in reinforcing teachers' sense of accountability and responsibility for poor results:

I know I'm accountable and these days the government says they want 60% pass, but it's not easy, because we are dealing with the kids that have a problem. I plan but sometimes I don't attain the standard that I wanted. I'm trying my 'level best'. Yes, it's too hard, because I'm not trained to do that,

so there are people that teach disabled people and teaching; ja, those people, so I can't. I'm trying, I don't know which skills I must use to help that child, because sometimes they are failing to utter a word in Grade Seven. They come mostly from other schools but we trying to help them (SI).

But despite this awareness, Ghettoh's reflection is turned inward, and the onus to improve is placed on her. Lortie (1975) refers to this as **individualism**, where Ghettoh judges how effective she is, based on criteria that she had developed for herself. She is not trained to teach learners with learning difficulties, and she expresses uncertainty about which skills are needed to help these learners. In such cases where there is very little outside help, all she is able to do is rely on herself, but it is an "uneasy self-reliance," (Albright, Clement & Holmes, 2012, p.79), because of her lack of knowledge of the skills needed to help learners. She seems resigned to the fact that she is responsible for this improvement, despite success being far-reaching. Whilst she recognises that there are social problems that impact upon what is possible in the classroom, she continues to work hard in the hope of achieving the 60% improvement rate that the Department demands teachers to work towards. She understands that the social problems prevent this achievement, but is accepting of the demand placed on teachers, without the realisation that structural constraints prevent her from being successful. She works in the **continued hope** that her level best would be able to transform the structural inequality that learners face.

What is vital here is the personal sense of responsibility that she takes up, which is reinforced by departmental demands. It is a situation in which she does not have the required skills, or the departmental support, but is expected to raise achievement levels. This in turn raises the levels of responsibility that teachers continue to feel for lack of achievement, causing it to become internal, as opposed to external. It is resonant with Biesta's (2004) understanding that accountability and responsibility are intertwined, but these indeed raise questions as to who one is answerable to. Ghettoh believes that she is mostly answerable to herself, but it is overwhelming, and these self-beliefs set teachers up for failure, where they blame themselves for the lack of success.

Whilst Zippo, Sthe and Ghettoh discussed their negative feelings, they continue to work hard in the hope that things will get better. One of the ways in which Sthe negotiates the demands from an "interfering bureaucracy" (Haberman, 1995b, p. 780) is through the development of a support network within the school with his fellow mathematics teachers. This prevents him

from being overwhelmed by bureaucratic demands. This network became a source of **emotional sustenance** (Haberman, 1995). However, I believe that their repeated lack of success and external and internal accountability demands have the potential to constrain teachers' attempts to access the moral rewards of teaching. Teachers here are teetering on the brink of demoralisation and burnout, mostly due to unacknowledged feelings of despair, and their lack of awareness of, or their refusal to acknowledge insurmountable structural impediments that influence their academic success.

This continued lack of success, the stressful workload, the various difficult roles that teachers have to play, and the multitude of social problems that impact on what teachers are able to do results in what B.V. for example, experienced as **burnout**. She spoke repeatedly of her fatigue and a compromise in her efficiency: *"I get home I have to rest... I am tired. Ja, I am tired. You don't have time to relax. I am tired I can't go on like this... the period that I have worked is long, and even working in the class after the day I feel that I cannot"* (FI). She still likes teaching, but appears to have run out of the energy it requires of her, where she states, *"I cannot continue anymore"*. She no longer has the personal reserves to continue teaching and is waiting for the day when she can retire for, she noted, the *"road we are having is difficult"* (FI). For B.V., teaching is exhausting, and may be an example of what Zembylas (2003) refers to as emotional labour, for she experiences teaching as tiring, not only because of academic expectations, but as a result of the emotional and social expectations from and for learners. There is a disjuncture between what she believes she says here in the need to be seen as a teacher who cares in an acceptable manner. For her, increased workloads and marking often result in her having to complete this at home, where *"you don't have time to relax and even during the weekend you sit with the books"* (FI). This constant pressure and exhaustion leads her to the realisation that she can no longer continue to teach under such conditions.

The pressure is intensified by her own personal need to adhere to her values of honesty, integrity, care and fairness. B.V. must continue to provide learners with the necessary support that they need, and she admits that *"I might not be a hundred percent perfect doing that, but I make sure that, the child is a society, is a future society. Then I must assist or support he child in such a way that his future or his success in life is bright"* (SI). These high expectations that she places on herself bring about feelings of guilt, and she struggles when she finds that she is unable to live up to her personal values: *"then my accountability, my*

honesty is gone” (SI). When learners fail to do the work she has given she “*ends up doing things that I am not supposed to do*” (SI) like punishing them unfairly. These all have the impact of emotional labour and a feeling of being constantly exhausted.

B.V.’s **emotional disorientation** (Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006) result in what Ball (2003, p. 223) calls “**individual schizophrenia of values and purposes.**” This is evident in the positive and negative emotions that she displays. She has to manage and negotiate a complex maze of emotions where she is concerned about taking care of the learners who on occasion bring her relief but also frustration and guilt. She has to also live according to her own personal beliefs and values which are an orientating but sometimes restrictive force for her. These emotional highs and lows (Nias, 2002) reinforce her emotional disorientation (Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006). B.V. attempts to find the personal reserves or motivational tools to fulfil various conflicting understandings that surround her practices. There is tension between all these forms of accountability and responsibility. She finds it difficult to access the emotional rewards intrinsic to her everyday practice. The personal and psychological costs cause her to do things that she is not comfortable with, setting up what Ball (2003) refers to as **ontological dilemmas**. B.V. finds her sense-of-self is lost because she is uncertain of how to regain the energy and passion for her teaching, resulting in her longing for retirement as her discomfort at going against what she believes in ethically becomes a casualty in this era of accountability (Ball, 2003).

B.V. indicates that she still finds teaching enjoyable in its quotidian aspects. As she describes it:

they do make jokes, they do funny things, even saying I have left my pen. Sometimes the stress goes because now I am concentrating on that pen that someone has lost, someone had complained about a headache, those problems that they come to us with. They make me free and stress free. Because I can help solve those problems (FI).

Hargreaves (2010) has captured this form of understanding of emotions in the term **addictive presentism**, which the author argues is evident when teachers show pleasure and enthusiasm for the successes that they can see immediately and do not engage with long-term effects or trying to bring about transformation. Albright et al. (2012) have used this concept to understand teachers in times of changes, and for them, addictive presentism occurs when

teachers try to respond effectively to increasing pressure from policy changes and accountability measures. They argue that addictive presentism “has a sense of compulsion” to it (Albright, et al., p. 80-81), for it only enables short-term solutions and strategies to emerge. B.V. does not think about how to change her practice, or find alternative ways to meet accountability demands and excessive workload.

Instead, B.V. turns to “**just in time**” (Hargreaves, 2010, p.50) short-term strategies to help her to find the necessary enthusiasm and motivation for her own internal psychic rewards. This “just in time” strategy is slightly different to the way in which Hargreaves (2010) has used this concept, for he used it to explain the ways in which teachers alter their practice to meet the academic or curriculum needs of learners. For B.V., her ‘just in time’ or immediate strategies are to meant to provide her with the psychic rewards of helping solve the small problems of learners that give her a sense of control over her practice. Psychic rewards are “scarce, erratic and unpredictable” (Lortie, 1975, p. 211), but they provide her with the necessary motivation to continue. She finds comfort in the fact that she “*can help solve those problems*”, like learners not having pens, or complaining of a headache, because these are things that learners require. She does not question or reflect on the underlying causes of her heavy workload, and the inability to find leisure time in this situation defined by an accountability context. This intense emotional labour is similar to the experiences of the participants in the study by Isenbarger and Zembylas (2006), who reported that participants understood their emotional labour as both alienating and liberating.

Ghettoh, Zippo and B.V. understood the importance of their work and it formed an integral part of their professional identity. In the struggle to make meaning of their work so as to experience it as purposive and fulfilling, teachers describe teaching as consuming, taking precedence above family and leisure time. Teachers understand how they experience their teaching intellectually and rationally, but find negotiating their emotions involved in their teaching disconcerting. Teachers’ utterances and feelings represent what Isenbarger and Zembylas (2006) refer to as ‘**emotional work**’ and could lead to what Santoro (2011) denotes as demoralisation and burnout. Emotional work is according to Isenbarger and Zembylas (2006) essentially about the effort that is required in empathising and sympathising with the plight of others.

However, being subjected to such all-consuming emotional work deprives teachers of the moral rewards, and I believe also, the emotional rewards of teaching. They are unable to distance themselves and their emotional labour, ultimately leads to a lack of **emotional agency**. Teachers have a shared emotional connection with learners, and their actions are intended to alleviate the hardships both personal and academic that learners encounter (Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006). But my study shows that caring and responsibility are not a natural ethics, but rather is deeply reflective, requires effort and critical care responses. Here teachers' emotional work is enveloped by their shared sense of empathy and sympathy for learners that continue to be intrinsic-motivating resources indicative of their commitment to their learners.

6.7 The Struggle to Find a Niche: “*I personally don’t see it benefitting me*”

The following narratives are valuable in that they present a more in-depth understanding of the moral rewards of teaching. It provides an opportunity to examine the context of the practice of teaching, where the moral and emotional rewards of teaching are no longer available, and where teachers question the purpose of their work. Evange's responses in this section, present a departure from the sentiments expressed by the other teachers. His feelings of discontent and general dissatisfaction do not stem from **externally imposed demands**, but is rather an **internal disquiet**. This disquiet and dissatisfaction appear to stem from his choice of career, and the lack of personal growth that he feels he is missing from his career as a teacher. He did not envisage becoming a teacher: “*I never ever thought of becoming a teacher*”, where instead, it was a “*shortcut to finishing a degree and getting a job*” (FI). For him, the lack of career guidance at school meant that he made choices that he later found unsuitable. Whilst saying this however, he displayed passion and enthusiasm for his practice and his relationships with the learners. This passion and enthusiasm he ascribed to his strong Christian values, having expressed in daily interactions wanting to have become a minister. In the first interview Evange indicated that he did not really enjoy teaching, mostly because:

there is a lot of responsibility. And also I don't get so much fulfilment at the end of the day in terms of how I have grown. Of course, I do accomplish a whole lot of good things in the class and the school as a whole. But I just feel within me it is just not what I really want and where I want to be at in the future.

This is exacerbated by teaching in a primary school, since he was trained to teach high school learners. Mathematics at this level did not challenge him intellectually, and he found it difficult to negotiate the manner in which the subject was taught historically at the school. Thus, teaching mathematics did not provide him with enough passion and creativity, and he had to work in different ways that left him feeling unfulfilled. For him, *“I personally don’t see it benefitting me so much in terms of growing, in terms of widespread knowledge. I feel that I am becoming more and more specialised in terms of knowledge”* (FI). Mathematics teaching at the school was confining, restricting and lacked the critical edge that university education had emphasised. He questioned the purpose of being a mathematics teacher. However, as evident in the above narrative, he still accomplished a great deal in terms of the subject and in his relationships with the learners. He did not allow his personal feelings of discontent to encroach on his practice, and was an enthusiastic and creative thinker in the classroom. Given the age group and his lack of experience of teaching primary school, he felt that his sense of responsibility towards the learners was magnified and felt the pressure of this.

Ahem, I find that teaching has a lot of responsibility. In terms of how you conduct yourself and what you do in the class, outside the class, in the home, outside. It is one thing that I found it is continual. I don’t say, ‘oh, now I am at home but it still forms part of what you are doing at home. Like preparation you would not be able to prepare for work at work all the time. You may find that you have meetings, at times you have staff development workshops. We are busy with other things, so you can’t really, you know can’t settle down (FI).

For him the responsibility of being a teacher came *“just by virtue of being a teacher”* (FI). This sense of responsibility was also inculcated within the ethos of the school where the school’s mission was based on *“transparency, love, joy [...] and everyone mission is based on learning [...] so you find that people go an extra mile to help the learner”* (FI). However, for Evange, he had to still ensure that learners were exposed to quality education, because *“it is all about justice that has to be done to the learners”* (FI), and he regarded himself as a good teacher. Evange draws upon discursive resources around democratic discourse and **Christian discourse** that have constructed his knowledge of ethical relationships towards others. For him, maintaining this ethical imperative of quality education was about being just and fair. But these discourses and resources tend to weigh him down. Evange is an example of a teacher who questions whether the work he is doing is worthwhile and purposeful, but

his Christian ethics prevent him from being unjust to his learners. However, he does not know where and how to access the emotional rewards from teaching and would prefer being a minister. At the time of the second interview he was still teaching, albeit in a high school, and whilst feeling slightly more challenged intellectually, he said that he still could not find his passion. However, personal circumstances and financial constraints prevented him from leaving teaching.

Evange's personal identity as a Christian minister now exerted intense influence on his practice and held him personally responsible for fulfilling his ethical and moral role of ensuring that learners succeed. But he recognises the impossibility of ensuring that all learners are successful, given that he has seventy three learners in his class and so sets his *"own standards at the beginning of every term. [...] If want to achieve say this percentage. But always it would be 100%, but if I get that only 78% made it, then I get a bit worried and then I focus much more on myself and think about how can I improve"* (SI). For Evange, the accountability and sense of responsibility that he sets for himself is arduous, because he still worries and blames himself if he gets 78 percent, and focuses more on himself and the question of *"how can I improve?"* His efforts to ensure learner achievement puts pressure on him, where he draws attention to the understanding that: *"I find it hard to balance sometimes, but I just keep trying because it is many [learners] now, many"* (SI).

Evange finds himself in a shaky space, because his lack of joy stems from within and he does not feel "securely anchored to the notion of teaching as a career" (MacLure, 1993, p. 320) because, despite feeling like this his position as a minister, his conscience and his commitment to social justice prevent him from lowering his standards. For him, providing quality education is essential to ensuring justice for the learners. He wavers between feeling trapped and alienated from his own sense-of-self, and the responsibility that teaching brings, as well as his own conscience and Christian and ministerial values, where the role merely serves the expectations of the school. What is interesting about Evange is that his feeling of a **lack of belonging** and ownership of identity comes from an **internal space**, and not from **external constraints and impositions**.

6.8 The Demands of Accountability: *"We are trying but they are not motivated"*

Teachers felt the accountability measures evident by policy and media reports were emotionally damaging to them. This study reveals the corrosive influence that external

demands have on teachers. Media reports detailed the decline in educational standards and targeted teachers as being solely responsible for this. These reports and constant media attention had a psychological effect on the teachers, where they questioned their own efficacy and ability. In effect, teachers own expectations, coupled with the demands of accountability and responsibility from the public and the Department, resulted in feelings of inadequacy and alienation and failure in their own work. Ngubs' narrative is an example of a change in **the relational space** (Fenwick, 2009) between teachers and other stakeholders in education. Ngubs was the one teacher who openly expressed the difficulty of being held accountable for the academic results of learners. For him, the ethic of responsibility is being used unfairly, and he forwards an understanding that the responsibility of poor educational results is a shared joint venture that requires joint action and accountability. It is a way for him to exert a form of control and agency over his work, and to reinsert the importance of educators in South African society.

Ngubs had indicated previously the extent to which he had invested himself in empowering students, mostly through his endeavours in pastoral care, often going beyond what was necessary. He drew on the ethic of responsibility intrinsic to his practice as a discursive resource in his authoring of his narrative and rationalised his dissent against the current trends evidenced in newspaper reports and national testing results, pointing to his commitment as a teacher and as a school. In such discrediting times, where the work that teachers do are made public and questioned (Kallaway, 2007), the pressure of being a teacher was too great. He found it difficult to continue and did not enjoy teaching, as he put it, "*a hundred percent*". This he attributed to teaching, where he noted:

kids are totally different from our school days. They have lots of freedom and they don't want to study, they don't want to do school work. They simply come to school [...] they are carried away by these rights that are there in the Constitution. They forgot about their responsibility, so it is a bit hectic and it is not nice to be a teacher these days (FI).

Ngubs provides insight into a time in his teaching career when he was able to experience the moral rewards of teaching before learners became "*carried away by these rights*". Now that learners have rights but lack the sense of responsibility these imply, he finds that it is "*not nice to be a teacher.*" But despite this and the lack of interest and motivation on the part of

learners, Ngubs revealed that he was a committed teacher, committed to both the learners and to the practice of teaching. This was, for him, an ethical and responsible claim. His commitment to learners was his motivational prop or a discursive resource that he tried to use to end his feelings of **disequilibrium** or **uncertainty** (Fenwick, 2009, Kornberger & Brown, 2007) and connect to a time when his work had purpose and meaning. As a school, he and other teachers showed their willingness to adapt to the needs of learners and to pursue better results, often having “*afternoon classes where we try and help assist them*” (Joel, SI). These school-based decisions were made without the input from other stakeholders e.g. the department of education, the community or parents, but were instead a pragmatic attempt by the school to be responsive to learner needs and accountability measures from the Department of Education. However, lack of interest on the part of learners, as well as the social problems of safety, resulted in this being a failure.

Ngubs tried various ways to motivate learners and to develop himself professionally in order to help learners. He was motivated by the **intrinsic moral dimension** of teaching and saw his work as one of the ways in which to empower learners for the future. So he developed himself professionally to empower and motivate learners: “*you using different techniques to encourage the learner to do that. But if the learner doesn’t receive any kind of encouragement from the parent or anyone from the community it becomes difficult for the teacher alone to do the job*” (SI). He questioned his ability to perform and do ‘good work’, resulting in feelings of alienation from his own work. He also as previously indicated willingly took on various additional roles required by the school and the learners themselves, namely that of mother, father, financial provider and moral guide. Nieto (2009) and Santoro (2011) have indicated that all teachers need to feel a sense of accomplishment, success and personal gratification that enable them to reaffirm a positive sense of their personal and professional identities. Ngubs expresses his frustration and vulnerability, where, despite all his efforts to be completely responsive to learners, parents and the community, he found that they do not see the value in his work and that it is “*difficult*” being a teacher. The ideals that brought him “to teaching are fast disappearing” (Nieto, 2009, p. 8). His personal and professional identities are in conflict and disarray.

The relationships that Ngubs had previously shared with learners are in jeopardy, and he can no longer fulfil his roles, in the sense reminiscent of Levinas’ (1969) understanding of ‘full humanity’. Full humanity here would mean the ability to see the entire ‘face’ of the learners

and accept his responsibility for the learners by virtue of their presence. This kind of shared encounter with learners is absent, and results in **moral distancing** on the part of Ngubs (Beasley & Bacchi, 2005). These researchers use the concept of moral distancing to denote an opposition to Levinas' concept of proximity. For Levinas (1969) proximity requires that a person acknowledge and pay attention to the 'Other.' Moral distancing however results in estrangement and is evident in the relationship between Ngubs and the learners. This understanding is an important one, and emphasises the complexity surrounding Ngubs' caring and responsible relationship. He makes the assumption that, given all that he does to fulfil his role, learners should reciprocate through investing in their learning. His extended efforts will also have far-reaching benefits for learners' future aspirations, but instead, this remains unacknowledged and absent. Learners continue to devalue education, lacking interest, and he feels helpless.

His narrative is reminiscent of what Beasley and Bacchi (2005) indicate to be problematic with the notion of caring, and, in this case, responsibility. In this complex **interdependent relationship**, Ngubs ethical stance towards his learners begins to lose its appeal. Here, Ngubs' relationship with the learners instead leaves him feeling isolated from them, and from himself, where he expressed that he cannot be fully himself. This is resonant with Levinas' (1969) understanding of an **exchange relationship** where Ngubs has expectations that his learners will reciprocate in the same manner. However, when the learners are unable or unwilling to reciprocate, he feels he cannot give anymore of himself and instead distances himself from them (Diedrich, Burggraeve & Gastmans, 2003). The relationship is no longer that of 'servant' to the learners because he expects effort back from them. He can no longer give unceasingly to them.

Ngubs felt that the lack of support from the stakeholders prevents him from being able to exercise his professional duties and engage in effective practice. The parents and community do not view the school as providing a valuable service, and for him, this is compounded by learners who are not eager to learn. He expressed his dissatisfaction in the **blame and shame** report that appeared in the newspaper the morning of the interview that highlighted the poor mathematics and English results and questioned the validity of the claim, asking: "*where did they do that survey? Because you never saw them, you've never heard of them up until we saw it in the media*". Whilst acknowledging that teachers are in some instances responsible for poor results, for him "*learners must be committed too*". He is aware that accountability

for results is not only the responsibility of teachers, but learners as well, and indicates that teachers can be well-prepared for a lesson, *“but if a child doesn’t want to receive the information?”* (SI). This can be viewed as a defence mechanism, for, in his adamant refuting of the validity of the report, he attempts to reposition teachers in a positive light. The critical understanding of shared responsibility is revealed, and he argues against the current norms of shame and blame evident in the media and government reports. He sees accountability as **socially manifold**, coming from learners, parents, government and teachers. His comments show that, despite all that he has to be and all that he is attempting to do, being held accountable to the public and to the Department is unfair.

Public reports and accountability measures fail to recognise that individual teachers cannot be held responsible for problems that are systemic and social. For Ngubs and Sthe, being publically portrayed as perpetrators of poor educational results involves a refusal to acknowledge the difficult circumstances under which teachers work, and that little attention is paid to the role that parents, learners, the Department of Education, as well as society play in this broader systemic problem. Sthe provides poignant understanding of teachers being left to carry the burden on their own, of being *“an island”* (SI). For Sthe, if quality education is to happen, there needs to be the involvement of all the stakeholders, who always make public pledges and promises to help the schools. He expressed his concern that the public pledges by the various stakeholders do not materialise in reality because: *“never come back to do that, they leave the school as the only place that can deliver that [quality education], whereas the school alone cannot do that”* (SI). This constant pressure of accountability, he maintains, results in a situation where *“teachers are demotivated. You look at the rate in which our teachers are resigning... so you cannot address/achieve that quality education”* (SI). He also indicated that teachers are being heralded as agents of change by the Department of Education, but questions the fairness of this when curriculum changes occur and *“you find that teachers are called for one day, only to make a change for a lifetime... yet this person is expected to bring about this change [...] they are agents of change”* (Sthe, SI).

Sthe’s understanding echoes research carried out by Shalem, (2003), De Clercq (2008) and Shalem and Hoadley (2009), and raises concerns as to the effectiveness of ‘radical change’ expectations. Shalem (2003) indicates that accountability requires a **“reciprocal relationship”**, where there is pressure on teachers to be accountable, along with the provision of adequate pedagogical support, to ensure that improvement is made (p. 31). Such

improvement can only occur once teachers are able to have access to meaningful opportunities and practices (Shalem, 2003). De Clercq (2008) agrees with the understanding, adding that teacher monitoring through IQMS for example, is meaningless without the requisite support to improve practice, which must also take into account the local context and differing needs of educators. This, together with the time frames required to implement the various changes in curriculum policy and the ineffective training that teachers are exposed to, make the call to “*make a change for a lifetime*” (Sthe) almost impossible.

For Sthe and Ngubs, the ethic of responsibility forwarded by the Department of Education and society in general are used to strategically manipulate who is accountable for poor results. The blame and shame discourses serve a disciplinary function, that reconfigures the relationship between the government, schools, parents and learners. This has shaped a particular kind of acceptable institutional identity that teachers find difficult to navigate. Teachers are trying to comply with regulations but they work with very little support from the organisations that want them to be *agents of change*. The inhibitive effects of **presentism** (Albright et al, 2012) prevent Ngubs in particular from developing long-term strategies and goals that would allow him to become the agent of change as required by the Department of Education. Both Ngubs and Sthe are engaged in a struggle to regain credibility (Kornberger and Brown, 2007) that questions the contradictions and ambiguities that are implicit in the discourses of blame and shame. They also question the **moral indifference** (Bauman, 1988) displayed by the Department of Education as an attempt to rationalise, distance themselves and objectify results, where teachers alone have to take the responsibility for learner results. Ngubs’ sense of demoralisation and discontent is acknowledged by Kallaway (2007), who explains the public discourse that surrounds teachers’ practice in South Africa:

The teaching profession is in profound crisis because teachers are angry and consider themselves to be undervalued and underpaid. Teachers are the most maligned, frequently criticised, widely misunderstood and grossly underrated professional group in society. They have not been given a substantive change to be heard when it comes to establishing priorities and setting goals for policy reform. Yet they are blamed when things go wrong (Mail & Guardian, paragraph 17).

Ngubs refuses to submit to the power dynamics prevalent in education and instead expressed the following sentiments:

the government doesn't recognise the teachers.... That is one thing that makes someone to hate teaching; and also the kids as not as cooperative as you expect them to be. Our government doesn't put any money or more money or enough money in education of remuneration of the teacher (SI).

The **non-material rewards** of teaching that previously sustained Ngubs no longer applies and for him this shows a lack of recognition of teachers as a valuable resource on the part of the government. He also pointed to social issues like poverty, lack of language ability, as well as the way in which education is valued by the community, as factors that impact on the provision of quality education. Kallaway (2007) points to the lack of critical engagement about the challenges faced by teachers in working-class schools, with learners who need so much more and where there is “gross underestimation of the difficulty of the task that teachers face” (paragraph, 15). This lack of recognition of the efforts that teachers put into their work by parents, learners, community, media and government have the effect of **demoralisation**, where Ngubs feels that he can no longer access the moral dimensions of his work, and does not enjoy teaching (Santoro, 2011). The continued lack of support and interest from the department, the community and learners, and the intense public scrutiny and subsequent blaming of poor results, has led to feelings of unhappiness and **demoralisation** for Ngubs. The community, learners and Department of Education have been remiss in their dismissal of a valuable resource, namely that of committed teachers.

6.9 Lack of Agency with Regard to Work: “He never came to me as a teacher”

Ngubs’ feelings of demotivation, disillusionment and **demoralisation** were further exacerbated by the lack of consultation from the Department. He expressed these feelings with departmental officials, who denied him his professionalism when visiting the school, but “he never came to me as a teacher. He went straight to the office and talked about the workbooks and so on. She [he] stamped her [his] authority that these must be used” (SI). This lack of control left him feeling disempowered. He regarded himself as the expert within his class and he had knowledge of his learners. This lack of consultation and the resultant confusion engendered a chasm between the Department of Education and teachers. He found that there was a lack of clarity in relation to departmental expectations. He could not exercise his pedagogical judgement, because departmental officials and policy insist that schools use

the *Foundations for Learning* workbooks. However, Ngubs felt the workbook contradicted the Curriculum Assessment Policy, claiming that there was a lack of coherence and continuity between the two, where “*there were gaps in the workbook*”. This created discord, because “*I always followed the policy*” and now “*they came and said: ‘no, you must work with the workbooks’; and there were gaps in the workbook*” (SI). This was perplexing, because he was unable to exercise his professional agency. He could not make decisions and determinations about what to teach, and found that his pedagogical knowledge and judgement were constrained, and that this impacted on his pedagogical authority.

This resulted in feelings of alienation from his own work, and presented further pressure, because “*eventually you’ve got to account from your superiors as to whether you have been following this or not and there should be evidence for that*”(SI). These forms of accountability, coupled with negative public scrutiny, enforce moral obligation to constantly perform ‘good work’, despite attention to structural barriers (Santoro, 2011). The process of **exteriorisation** (Ball, 2003) affects the relationship that he has with his own work, rendering what he knows as being worthless and he feels uncertain but still has to comply. He attempts to find ways to gain some control over his work in politically informed ways, based on what learners need, as well as what curriculum policy says, but this negotiation is compromised. The lack of agency on his part was pertinent, and despite the fact that he found it interesting to work with the new curriculum, he could not be creative and change it to suit learners needs “*I try sometimes I try but sometimes it is no easy*” (SI).

Ngubs’ lack of agency over his own work is reinforced by having to constantly meet external accountability demands in the form of the Annual National Assessment (ANA) paper, that comes “*with maybe something that you know, it doesn’t suit my kids but the paper comes with it [...] They talk about the space shuttle, I’ve never seen it but I’ve got to teach it because maybe it will appear... the child will write about it*” (SI). For him, the paper did not take into account the “*environment of all the schools in South Africa*”, where he felt that whoever sets ANA. should “*study the policy and make sure that a child who is in Happy Ville or a child that is in Forest Hill will have the same experiences of what will appear in ANA*” (SI). Here, Ngubs shows evidence of the divide between teachers’ experiences and understandings and departmental expectations.

Ngubs' account provides an explanation of how to look at the issue of quality education and results politically and systematically, rather than bearing the burden on a personal level. His inability to meet the needs of learners because of contextual factors places strain on him. He refuses to lay "*blame*" at the feet of other teachers, but believes that the social issues that learners are exposed to prevent them from being motivated to learn. It is in this kind of environment that teachers like Ngubs find themselves. Ngubs can no longer be all things to everyone, as the moral rewards are elusive, and he has become demoralised. However, he has no alternative but to remain in teaching, despite the fact that he is not "*100 percent happy*." Ngubs' narrative is an important one as it highlights the complexity that surrounds care and responsibility for teachers in South African schools.

6.10 Concluding Remarks

This chapter troubled the ethic of responsibility and care that surrounds teaching, presenting it as complex, uncertain, unpredictable and complicated in practice. Findings reveal that firstly, being ethically responsible for the academic performance and success for learners presented teachers with many difficulties. The relationships between teachers and learners come sharply into focus. This ethic of responsibility and care is complicated by the fact that teachers held themselves personally responsible for learner achievement. Locked in environments that question the purpose of education, and where learners challenge teachers' relationships with them, teachers struggle with emotions that lead them to question their self-worth, resulting in alienation from their own work. Secondly, ever-increasing demands result in emotional labour that captures the highs and lows associated with teaching (Nias, 2002). The emotional labour that teachers struggled through was both alienating and liberating (Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006), where it provided them with the motivational tools to generate renewed passion, but also trapped them in a stranglehold of responsibility, due to their context and their own personal embodied beliefs. Three elements that surround teachers' practice were examined; namely, burnout, internal disquiet and demoralisation that emphasise the multi-layered tensions, contradictions, and complexity.

Finally, a key finding emerged that highlights the difficulty surrounding responsibility and care as social justice practice, especially in relation to accountability. This accountability was internally and externally imposed and resulted in the breakdown in the ethical, responsible relationships that were crucial to teachers embodied identities and practice. This resulted in a divided, fragile self, where questions around responsibility and care as **effortless and natural**

as espoused by theorists are emphasised (Biesta, 2004, Beasley & Bacchi, 2005). Instead, the interdependence of relationships must be researched that include teachers' own historical and personal understanding and the influence of context, social, economic and political factors that influence how and why teachers take on responsibility and care. The following chapter provides an analysis of teachers' pedagogical practices towards social justice and equity.

Chapter Seven: Re-imagining Teachers' Pedagogical Practices

7.1. Introduction

The previous chapter provided insight into teachers' struggles, dilemmas and tensions that they encountered in their praxis of responsibility and care. In this section, I present teachers' instructional practices and the various attempts they make to improve the learning of those in their care. The chapter troubles the concepts of equity and social justice and argues for these as complex and difficult, where there are no easy answers, but instead, more questions. It is hoped that the manner in which these concepts are thought about and practised might expand the ways in which to think about how best to be responsive to the needs of learners in schools. It raises questions about how we might have an understanding of value-laden terms like social justice and equity given that these concepts require human judgement about what is fair and just for learners. Without purely defined goals and ways in which to achieve this, teachers try to find ways to make sense of their practice and to help learners achieve academic success.

I firstly make attempts to understand the dynamics that surround teachers' practices, which were influenced by their personal and historical experiences of learning English and mathematics. These experiences provided teachers with the necessary resources for their present pedagogical practices and decisions, but these were fraught with difficulty and tension. This is followed by attempting to understand teachers' instructional practices that detail the struggles to achieve academic success in contexts where schooling is questioned. Thereafter, I provide insight into some of the factors, in the pedagogical practices of teachers that impede learners' access to quality education. Finally, the different strategies that some teachers devised to ensure learners' access to success and quality are illuminated.

The following research questions guided the analysis of this chapter: what are teachers' pedagogical practices of social justice and equity in the classrooms, and how do teachers negotiate various contextual factors and tensions evident in their classroom practice?

7.2 Dynamics Surrounding Teachers' Practices

In this section I present the dynamics that are influential in teachers' practices. Teachers own experiences of learning mathematics and English had resonated profoundly with how they thought about these learning areas, as well as how they informed their practice. I provide understanding of the way in which teachers negotiated contemporary discourses that surround

English and mathematics, and the difficulty teachers experienced in having to balance the tensions and contradictions between what is valued by the curriculum, learners, community and teachers. The purpose of schooling is questioned and teachers have to intricately negotiate their practices to help learners understand the importance of schooling and education. This volatile mix shows the near impossibility of meeting equity and social justice demands, as depicted in policy and human rights discourses.

7.2.1 Historical influences on teaching practices: “*It was a privilege for me to speak English*”

Teachers own schooling experiences played a significant role in how they understood the subjects that they taught. The English teachers gave historical reasons as to why they chose to teach and learn English, whilst mathematics teachers spoke about present day influences. For the English teachers in particular, historical factors determined their access to the dominant language at the time, namely English. Here, teachers related painful instances of being disadvantaged academically because they were taught in isiZulu. During apartheid, mother-tongue language was promoted as the language of instruction. Their historical stories are symbolic of how teachers maintained ‘**histories in their persons**’ (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 417). B.V. looked to her past schooling experiences, where she learned in her mother-tongue, which was isiZulu “*up to standard six. Everything was isiZulu*” (FI). However, learners were then expected to start learning English in Grade Eight, which for her was disempowering, and resulted in her struggling in school. She thus preferred teaching and learning in English, and indicated: “*I feel they should be taught in English from Grade One for their benefit, and isiZulu should be taught as just a language*” (FI). Ghettoh had the same experiences of English learning. For her, being unable “*to communicate in English*” prevented her from success where “*we couldn’t even write in Grade 12. We came to the paper [examinations] and we don’t know what it is all about*” (FI).

What is present in their utterances is their understanding that they lacked **linguistic and social power** and this resulted in their experiences of failure. Their inability to access this **non-material social good** (Perumal, 2015), which for them was bound up with power, and played a major role in determining their linguistic and intellectual success, influenced their present day pedagogic role, but it also caused them to oppose the teaching of their mother-tongue. They believed the use of their mother-tongue in class was disadvantageous to learner’s success in school, and instead, felt that isiZulu “*should be taught as just a language*” (B.V.). The **social perceptions** evidenced by their past experiences of English

informed teachers' decisions to assume responsibility for the future of their learners. In this, English was positioned as the language that was beneficial, and not their mother-tongue. Thus, teachers' past experiences of being powerless played a pivotal role in them assuming agentic dispositions, and "presents an understanding of how place shapes pedagogy and teachers' personal and professional performance and dispositions" (Perumal, 2015, p. 27). Ngubs and Joel, however related what were positive experiences of learning in English that influenced their decisions to become teachers of English.

Basically when I was in Grade Five, Standard Four, I was speaking English with my teachers. It was like a privilege for me to speak English, and, you know, I used to converse with the teachers. They liked me when I conversed because I understood them and I could talk to them. I grew up loving English, loving to speak it. [...] now I'm teaching it, the learning area that I love. I spoke it when I was in my tender age and now I'm teaching it (Ngubs, FI).

Joel was influenced by a teacher who, for him, inspired him due to "*the way that he was actually speaking English. In most of the time he was speaking English and that I could say really, I was so impressed*" (FI). Here, the teachers' negative experiences of learning in their mother-tongue of isiZulu and the positive experiences of learning the language of English are highlighted. For these teachers, the ability to speak and learn English was a powerful tool which they used to gain recognition in their lives. Ghettoh, Joel, B.V and Ngubs show a critical understanding of the historical context in which they lived and learned, and the power associated with language. Ngubs especially believed that because he was able to 'speak' and share the same language with his teacher, his identity as a successful learner of English was affirmed. The **affective emotional bonds** of belonging, privilege, power and status that Ngubs shared with his English teachers are affirming and positive (Perumal, 2015) and reinforces the importance of the language.

Ngubs and Joel placed emphasis on the ability to speak English properly and this provided them with social status and power. This was an indicator of the real force and power for teachers and was also emphasised in their present practices as teachers. Both teachers indicated that it was vital to teach learners how to "*express themselves, to communicate in English... to be able to talk to each other in English... not to only at a school level but even outside*" (Joel, SI). This emphasis on orality was an important one for both Joel and Ngubs,

whose ideas of English informed their practice. Both these teachers focused on ‘correct’ usage and pronunciation of words. The lesson observations and field notes throughout the six weeks that I was at the school revealed the importance of this for Ngubs, where he would repeatedly get learners to repeat words that they did not pronounce correctly:

Lesson observation (10/10/2012)

T: Sometimes people are failing to see how to use these words properly... You must improve your pronunciation and reading speed. Let us pronounce the word ‘creature’.

L: ‘Creature’. [Teacher leads them to repeat three times]

T: ‘Weakens’ – let us all say: ‘weakens’. Comes from the word ‘weak’. [Learners repeat]

Lesson observation (12/10/12) also revealed the same emphasis on the pronunciation of words, namely words like *thrilled*, *attached*, *worm* and so on. Ngubs and Joel have been socialised into a particular understanding of a legitimate language learner. Given the positive affirmation and value that they were accorded by their teachers because of their ability to speak the language, this has now become part of their practice. Early and Norton (2014) indicate that this practice of teachers, with the focus on “getting one aspect right”, reflects an understanding of English “as a body of knowledge” informed by their understanding of syllabus requirements, rather than “as a system for meaning-making, as a set of social practices” (p. 687). This **misrecognition** (Fraser, 1995) of their past as a resource and their experience of the affirming nature of speaking English, fails to provide learners with access to other forms of legitimate language acquisition, and results in learners being unable to access the necessary cultural capital in their world of school. However, Joel and Ngubs’ understanding of English is as a result of their own positive emotional experiences of learning English, which embodies their present practices, and which has the effect of working against social justice and equity goals.

Ghettoh and B.V. had negative experiences of learning in their mother-tongue, and as a result, could not assume valued and appropriate identities needed for them “*to write in Grade 12*” and to “*know what it is all about.*” For them, they have internalised the **imagined benefits** surrounding mother-tongue and English language learnings. B.V. and Ghettoh position English as a more beneficial language than their mother-tongue, which prevented them from accessing opportunities and success. English is reinforced as a language of success, and their mother-tongue language was experienced as alienating. This validates

political legitimatisation of the perceived benefits surrounding English. The education system at the time constrained opportunities for them to be able to access powerful knowledge, like English, which resulted in them experiencing injustice. What the education system during apartheid also did was to construct social power relations between the dominant English language and the subordinate languages of the indigenous Black people. In effect, hegemony of the language was assured through consent, where B.V. and Ghettoh accepted that their failure was intrinsic to them not knowing the language adequately, rather than systemic oppression surrounding their access to the language. B.V. and Ghettoh look back at their lack of access with a certain sense of acceptance of what they experienced.

These historically inherited stories, rooted in negative experiences, provided the logical justification for their present practices and belief around language. All the teachers make the deliberate choice that learners “*should be taught in English from Grade One for their benefit*” (B.V., SI), and also position their identities as English teachers. These social and ideological repertoires embody their negotiation of their teaching contexts (Perumal, 2015). Their practices are informed by a pragmatic need to offer learners opportunities for social integration in a world where English is both historically and increasingly prioritised, and in doing so, they took up agential positions needed to negotiate the current context. These were opportunities that they did not have themselves, and so wanted this for subsequent generations represented by their learners.

7.2.2 Establishing subject identities

Teachers position the subjects they teach in different ways. Here, I firstly narrate the mathematics teachers’ stories of passion, enthusiasm and difficulty. These stories also reveal the manner in which teachers negotiate the places in which learners live and learn, and shaped their personal and professional dispositions. The stories from the English teachers which follow here provide a slightly different perspective. These are stories that involve feelings of dissonance, and are influenced by deficit discourses. The historical battle between the two languages continues and teachers experience a sense of **dislocation** from their learners and their context. This is resonant with Buell’s (1995) observation cited in Perumal (2015, p. 29), that the “social environment, the expectations, approvals and condemnations of others shape the learning and behaviour of an individual”. Teachers make the attempt to reposition themselves in this context, with the hope that their efforts may realise just and

equitable outcomes for learners. Their efforts are seemingly rejected by their learners as they are contrary to what learners need.

7.2.2.1. Passion for Mathematics teaching and knowledge: “Mathematics you always remain a student.”

Evange, Zippo and Sthe’s practice and understanding of mathematics is an example of teachers in the process of becoming. Their stories reveal enthusiasm and passion for the subject they taught. Whilst being passionate and enthusiastic, there is also an understanding that wider social and cultural contexts played a significant role in the way in which teachers managed the teaching and learning of it.

Sthe: *Mathematics you always remain a student; always remain a student. I enjoy those maths problems. Mathematics does not change. Go to Social Science, there were four provinces at one stage, now we have nine. We don’t know what might happen, but with mathematics it will not change. The area of a circle will never change. They can come with CAPS, but three times three will always be nine. They can come with various methodologies, but the formula of calculating area of a triangle will be half times height, times base (SI). Indeed, maths is a game, and it has got four operations, that is a given fact. Maths is a game. Unlike in English, it has got past tense, past participle and all those things. In mathematics you can do whatever, the bottom line is that you are going to add or subtract, multiply or divide. [...] it is a game that you need to play (FI).*

Zippo: *I enjoy teaching maths and to me [...] to me, I just like to make a difference in life (SI).*

Here, these teachers position mathematics and mathematics teachers as **powerful** and valued in the social world. For Sthe, mathematics teachers “are always in demand... and marketable... everybody wants maths teachers” (SI), which is reflective of a normative view. As a subject, mathematics is recognised as fascinating, an adventure and also has remained constant. Sthe distances mathematics from other learning areas that, for him, constantly change, whereas “*mathematics does not change*”. This is a firm understanding that mathematics as an abstract system is timeless, certain and objective. Mathematics is also described as invoking fascination, and being of relevance, where you always remain a learner and as a game that needs to be mastered. Positioning mathematics in this way is vital for

learners, but also for teachers, who must be able to teach learners how to master it as a ‘game’. It is associated with effort and contingent on learners’ motivation and interest in accessing the ‘game’. This is a different conceptualisation of mathematics to that of traditional historical beliefs of mathematical ability as associated with **inherited talent** (Ernest, 2015). Thus, teachers here view mathematics learning and teaching as that which can be learned, and mastered, very much like a game.

Zippo and Sthe presented a view that teaching mathematics is ‘*quite/very challenging.*’ But this challenge to teach and learn mathematics is associated with universal truths that surround the subject. Mathematics is presented as a difficult subject to learn and in South Africa; the media exacerbate this, raising doubt and scepticism through a focus on low rates of success. Teachers spoke about the frequent media reports, as well as Departmental scrutiny of results, and the Annual National Assessment Test that also reinforces the failure of learners. Zippo indicated: “*Every time you watch television or you hear something saying the maths you know learners fail maths*” (SI). This repeated and constant failure has the following results: “*most of the learners fail mathematics and sometimes I find that they have negative attitudes towards it*” (Zippo SI). These negative perceptions influence and impact on parents, who also teach their children that mathematics is difficult, and this presents a challenge for teachers “*because of the perceptions that the learners have of mathematics. Because of the way the parent say about it*” (Sthe, SI). Maths teachers “*are seen as monsters*”, along with fear associated with the learning of mathematical concepts (Sthe, FI).

Valero (2003, 2005) and Ernest (2015) indicate that these beliefs are widespread, and that taught behaviour and attitudes result in the development of negative attitudes and a lack of confidence in the learning of mathematics, producing a cycle of failure that is evident for learners from low socio-economic statuses. Parental perceptions of mathematics, influenced by public and societal discourses, are then passed on to children. This reflects the deeply entrenched views of mathematics that teachers are required to negotiate in order to provide learners with opportunities to learn. Valero (2003, 2005) agrees that this is vital, given the lack of quality research into the impact that learners’ backgrounds play in mathematical learning. The teachers in this study are aware of this **social and cultural complexity**, and it influences their pedagogical decisions. Their teaching environments are saturated with vast inequality, and this is compounded by learners, who are cognitively ill-prepared for schooling, where parental influence and support is often absent. School therefore functions as

the **sole site** of knowledge acquisition (Shalem & Hoadley, 2009), and thus, the teachers recognise the importance in ensuring learners' mathematical success.

7.2.2.2 The imagined community of English: “*They will have a problem if they don't know the language*”

Given teachers' learned understandings of the importance of English, an **imagined community** is envisaged. McKay (2010) and Norton and Toohey (2011) describe an imagined community as one where there are perceived or imagined **social and intellectual** benefits to learning a dominant language. The assumed benefits are that upward mobility is assured if the community of language learners and teachers **invest** in this community. Norton (2010) and Norton and Toohey (2011) use the concept of **investment** to explain the socially and historically constructed relationships of learners to learning a language. I have instead used this concept here to explain what motivates teachers to want to teach English and mathematics to learners in their classrooms. Teachers have intimate knowledge of their context and the contextual demands and thus invest themselves in ensuring that learners gain the necessary social and intellectual benefits associated with mathematics and English and thus increase their social capital.

For the teachers, foundational to this imagined community is the real belief that English is central to living and being in the world. Knowing, investing and empowering one through the use of English would help materialise this imagined community, with concomitant benefits. Suarez (2002) and Valero (2003, 2005) agree that teachers, in establishing both English and mathematics as powerful knowledge structures, make the assumption that these subjects have and can exert hegemonic power. These subjects are situated as having a life of its own independent of people or teachers' actions therein. The English teachers imagined that investment in language will provide learners with means to access educational, economic and social opportunities (Suarez 2002). This kind of empowerment, however, is both complex and problematic, and not assured, given that teachers and learners must buy into the perceived benefits.

B.V.: *Ja, it is important, because it is the language of communication across the board, and all the subjects are taught in the medium of English, and they will have a problem if they don't know the language... They will have a problem to the world at large, because they will have a problem of communication, have a problem of learning further because English is the basis of everything to them. Because*

English is the language that is used in the whole of South Africa and the world. [...] even if you listen to UKhozi our radio station. They speak Zulu, but... there are things that they say in English they say better in English. Yes, it is very important (FI).

Ghetttoh: *English is an international language and when they grow up and they looking for interviews, they are looking for jobs, they can't talk in the mother-tongue. They have to interact in English (FI).*

Joel: *At one point [in] their life they are going to be employed, and so it will be useless for them to learn Zulu if they can't express themselves in English. So they won't be able to be employed anywhere (SI).*

Ngubs: *We have to understand this concept globally. So, you know, English is known to be a commercial language where we all understand it. How many products have you come across in any shop that have African language? Very few. And that calls for us to study English, whether you like it or not. [...] Like the play station, there is no Zulu word for play station. Therefore it is a must for you to study and learn English to to speak it and to write it (SI).*

As previously discussed, the need to invest in the learning and teaching of English was as a result of teachers' personal historical experiences of English and their mother-tongue. Moreover, this need is due to teachers' critical reading of the broader social context that has situated English as imperative to success. From these narratives, not only is this evident, but the resultant outcome of these beliefs is the formation of a binary that places English as a language of status, power and success, and isiZulu as a language whose function is for communication, outside the realm of most formal institutional spaces. Ngubs, Joel and B.V. position the African languages as incapable of carrying the academic knowledge needed for the global and commercial world. IsiZulu is seen as limiting to future careers, as well as limited in terms of the required terminology to express or explain ideas. Here again, teachers reinforce and legitimate the importance and dominance of English as a powerful knowledge structure, that will provide personal value and acceptance in a valued world. In doing this, isiZulu is positioned as deficit. The teachers' utterances are representative of the ideology surrounding English as a powerful knowledge structure, which is essential to the experiences

of being valued and affirmed. English is ‘sold’ by the teachers as an “*international language*” (Ghettoh., FI), “*a language of communication*” (B.V, SI), and a language used in the workplace. These ideological underpinnings reinforce the perception that English is a ‘better’ language, and given teachers’ own historical experiences of the English language, together with the understanding of their current context, teachers’ attempt to position and negotiate the learning of English as vital for academic success. For them this was an equitable practice, where providing learners with access to English would allow them to acquire the necessary cultural and social capital needed in society.

Thus, teachers taught in a context where both English and mathematics were seen as difficult but powerful to learn. The imagined social and intellectual benefits to knowing these subjects are at the heart of what teachers envisage their role to be. These subjects are positioned as both a desire and a commodity that exerts **invisible symbolic power** (McKay, 2010) for it provides avenues of education and future employment, and also the necessary respect and recognition both within the schooling context and within broader society (Suarez, 2002). Positioning these subjects in this manner also positions teachers in powerful ways, as providers of the necessary skills that will allow learners to claim voice and a sense of agency in society. From the narratives above, teachers express clear understanding of the relationships between power and knowledge, and how it operates within society. This critical understanding of the power behind these subjects determines teachers’ practice. If learners are to have access to this power then teachers have to provide learners with the means to do this effectively. In providing these means, teachers then reinforce the legitimacy of these knowledge structures, a pragmatic concession made necessary by the inequity that learners are subjected to on a daily basis, and which has historically affected the teacher’s own lives. The acquisition of these skills contributes to learners assuming powerful, and affirming identities. Here, teachers use their own positional power to promote these subjects as important for the future of learners. It is a way in which to empower learners by teaching them the ‘rules of the game’ (Lamaison & Bourdieu, 1986). It forms the basis of their teaching in imagining a successful identity for learners.

7.2.2.3. Negotiating the environmental context: “*Once they get out, they forget everything*”

Teachers understood that the central feature of their subjects was that it was difficult and that repeated failure was common. Whilst teachers had a vision of the value of these subjects and the kinds of investments that were required to realise this vision, my own sense is that there

was however dissension between the learners and the schooling community about the perceived benefits. This dissension arose mostly around the issue of language and the perceived benefits of learning the English language by learners themselves, parents or the community. Here, English is constructed by the teachers as problematic, both for learners to learn and teachers to teach. In the first interview Joel provided insight into this difficulty that surrounds the language: *“Some learners it is difficult for them to express themselves, to write even simple sentences... they find it difficult”* (FI). Ngubs believed that learners lacked the motivation to try to participate and speak the English language *“they are not used to expressing themselves and won’t even try, they don’t want to do it or get involved or do activities. You encourage them to but in vain. They only want to talk in isiZulu. But they complain when they fail. So many of them fail. They don’t value it (English). They take those sentiments that they have in the family”* (FI). Joel and Ngubs therefore found it difficult to be passionate about their teaching, given their context. There were many factors that they encountered that prevented this motivation, enthusiasm and zeal from being maintained and even acquired. There was a sense of urgency, frustration and despair around the teaching of English and learners disinterest sometimes causes Ngubs to give up: *“They don’t do the work. We punish them for speaking isiZulu but they talk in the groups, then we say ‘let the sleeping dog lie’ and continue with those that are paying attention to you”* (FI).

For the English teachers, parents do not have knowledge of English themselves and within the home environment isiZulu is used and practised. They complained that they do not get help from parents to improve the English ability of their children. This is despite teachers informing parents that they *“must practise it (English) with them”* (B.V., SI) at the annual parent meeting at the beginning of the year. B.V., complained that *“parents ignore us, they don’t know it (English) and don’t worry about it, they don’t care. But they know that their children are failing it”* (SI). Joel furthers this understanding where for him *“English is not important to parents, no one uses it here (pointing to the community)”* (FI). For Ngubs, parents don’t see the value of education in general and English in particular where *“they always think it is their rights when you complain to them and tell them to help their children speak English. They say, ‘No one speaks it here so why must we talk this language, we don’t care’”* (FI). Within the field of the community setting English is not valued and is not a resource that parents can use to negotiate the community setting. It does not bring them the required cultural capital and the associated advantage and power to enhance their social mobility. Joel laments the fact that parents do not get involved in the education of their

children, and this makes it extremely difficult to “*instil the love of English, let alone mathematics*” (SI).

This is compounded by learners who do not take time to improve their ability in English: “*they don’t have time to look at the books, Anything that has to do with learning they only do it when they get in the premises of the school, once they get out, they forget everything. They show not interest... there is a lack of interest on the side of the learners when it comes to learning English*” (SI). Thus, teachers have to contend with trying to motivate learners to learn a language that they do not see as valuable where Joel indicates: “*most of the time they don’t speak English... their mother- tongues seem to be very, very influential and affects them to be able to speak good English*” (SI). For the learners, using their mother- tongue within the community is valued and provides them with symbolic capital and cultural capital that they do not access within school. It also provides an understanding of learners who use their own mother-tongue language in particular ways, and for particular purposes, often in ways discordant to that of the schooling context, and in disjuncture to how English is valued by society. Both Ngubs and Joel indicate that the community context plays a significant role in the lives of the learners and influences their investment in learning the English language.

From the comments of the teachers, it would seem that the role that English plays is largely symbolic, and is not a medium of communication for learners outside the classroom.

For Ngubs, as many as ninety percent of learners did not engage in learning that was meaningful to them. This could be due to their repeated lack of success, and where the existing norms, values and customs of school fail to relate to their own cultural life-worlds, and thus school is alienating and marginalising for them. This is also exacerbated, I contend by the fact that there is a lack of support from parents, and thus, teachers “cannot rely on parents that can model or mediate the cognitive demands of the school” (Shalem & Hoadley, 2009, p. 127). Whilst teachers may believe that learners are not motivated, it would be appropriate to argue that learners are not invested in the practices of the school and is evident in their refusal to speak English in the home, and in interaction with their peers, to do homework and to forget what they have learned once outside of the school premises.

This is significant as it speaks to ways in which learners seek to gain power and leverage over ‘the real world’ in which they live (Fataar, 2015), when there is **cultural dissonance** in the

learning experiences of learners, they “generally refuse to imbibe the message system of their schools” (p. 154). Teachers’ investments, however, must be seen against the backdrop of their own personal and professional identities, and their experience of being learners of English. Teachers and students do not share a **common imagined community**, where for B.V.: *“most of the parents are not interested in learning and they know nothing about learning and some are supportive. They have a vision for their children though some are not* (SI).

Joel, Ngubs and B.V. attempted to help learners in various ways, although they were not always successful. Joel and Ngubs tried to *“force learners to read”* to foster a love for reading. They also insisted that learners speak English both within the schooling premises and outside of it. Ngubs thought that this would empower not only learners, but parents too, and Ngubs encouraged learners to teach *“and practice it from [with] your mother, from your father, from your younger sister”* (SI). Ngubs’ insistence on practising spoken English resulted in him *‘appoint(ing) some monitors to see how they are doing but you know the kids they don’t do exactly what you want them to do’* (SI). Ghettoh and B.V. indicated that they have tried various ways in which to help their learners. They discussed the professional development workshops they attended, the help that they received from the local university programme called *Reading to Learn*, as well as international non-governmental organisations from Canada that *“tried also to help us”* (Ghettoh SI). But despite this, they continued to experience a lack of success in teaching learners successfully. The vision of imagined identities of successful learners is distant and unobtainable and different to reality. Teachers experience failure in trying to expose learners to the importance of English, and their attempts to construct successful English learners have been met with constant failure (Janks, 2000), where B.V. notes: *“...looking at the way they do the work it worries because they can’t work. I don’t know why. I’ve got no reason why”* (SI). This constant worry and concern underpins much of their work.

For the teachers, it appears that learners have no aspirations to be part of the imagined community of successful English language learning, and feel disconcerted and helpless as to how to motivate them, *“When it comes to learning there is something wrong. I don’t know how to help but somewhere there is a problem”* (Joel SI). There is a deeply entrenched chasm that positions parents and learners and teachers and schooling on opposing sides. I argue that by coming to school daily, learners have invested their future in schooling, holding out the

hope that doing well at school would result in a better life thereafter. However, from the findings above, the route to a better future and experiences of success remains unclear and tenuous and for the learners remaining en-route is no longer an option, given repeated failure and exclusion (Fataar, 2012). Thus, teachers' understanding of learners and parents as not being interested or supportive is more an indication that learners have read the complex world of their environment and have instead found that schooling does not live up to the promise of future and imagined success. Fataar (2015) indicates that when learners refuse to "opt in" or take up the learning opportunities available to them in school, this actually results in them being unable to effectively and successfully negotiate the schooling system. Teachers fail in their attempt to read the world of the learners (Freire, 1985), or have misrecognised the world, and so have difficulty teaching learners the importance of investing in learning English.

These feelings of despair and repeated failure are compounded by the fact that teachers' imagined communities of success are largely influenced by external constructions. Zippo, Sthe, B.V. and Ghettoh constructed successful learners as those that were in ex-Model C schools, and this placed undue pressure on what they were able to achieve, emphasising and exacerbating existing class inequalities. Here, teachers show the influence of media and socially constructed discourses that have hegemonised success along class lines. But constantly comparing their teaching and their learners to ex-Model C schools, whilst it served as a motivational tool to work towards an external construction of success, it also placed undue stress on what they were able to achieve. These were attempts by the teachers to engage and empower learners and not to marginalise them. Their expressions of delight that a minority of learners are successful at ex-Model C schools were also an attempt for them to make sense of their practice and to motivate them to continue to work hard.

Ghettoh: *We compete with Model C schools. Learners from here just go straight and fit into other school, because of how we doing as a school. SI [...] Maybe our school is a little much better than others but they come back and report [...] they excel in high school. We've got four scholarships from the school for good marks (FI).*

B.V.: *We cannot expect our child to go to schools like Alex, to those schools. We do not expect our children from this poor environment. But they go there and they perform just like the learners there (FI).*

Zippo: *I compare myself to what other school do things. I would just like to see how they do things like these model c school. It's how I weigh myself, how I see where I am, where I lack. Where I do right but looking at that trying to maintain the standard but it will depend. I can see the progress but to my learners aye, you can see that I am struggling. [...] You know we had visitation form Merchiston on Thursday. The teacher said: 'hey, Grade Fours, do you see that they are using the same book as ours?' I said: 'okay'. I was so happy that at least one thing which is the same as theirs, you know (SI).*

But whilst teachers reflect on themselves and make attempts to constantly improve and motivate learners, they still experience a lack of success. This could be partly because they do not have the necessary critical understanding of learners' lived circumstances in the community beyond the school, or where deep structural inequalities and environmental materiality (Perumal, 2015) continue to disempower, and teachers' efforts cannot engender improved outcomes and learning (Shalem & Hoadley, 2009). Questions begin to be raised as to what needs to be done to include the broader community in dialogical relationships to create a shared community that encompasses home and school. Teachers' own biographies and shared experiences of marginalisation and oppression are tools used to develop relationships, but what happens when this relationship is rejected?

7.3. Working towards equity: Teachers' instructional practices of equity

The ultimate aim for any educative process is for learners to acquire the necessary skills to be able to negotiate the culture of power that is implicit in schooling. One of these is exposing learners to knowledge. This section raises questions around what knowledge should be taught to learners, and the consequences for not providing learners with the necessary knowledge relevant to schooling and their future.

7.3.1 Dilemmatic positioning towards access to powerful knowledge structures: "So we are all on a learning curve"

In this section, data was used to understand teachers' instructional practices of equity which were elicited from the lesson observations, field notes and the interviews. I analysed the classroom observation data using Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse, in order to conceive of an external language of description. I looked, firstly, at his concept of classification in order to understand the way in which teachers empowered learners, by providing them with access to powerful knowledge structures. The lessons themselves

revealed strong **classification**: C+ in terms of the bounded nature of the subjects that teachers taught, indicating that each subject had “its own unique identity, its unique voice, its specialised rules” (Bernstein, 1996, p. 21). In the lessons that I observed, the teachers, with the exception of Ghettoh, seldom referred to learners’ everyday knowledge. During the second interview, however, teachers provided reasons as to why it was vital to bring in the life-world knowledge of learners. However, dominant or traditional understanding of the different learning areas seemed to be in tension with one another, with teachers taking up positions that both privilege and distance learners from their access to this knowledge. Bernstein’s concepts were used in combination with other concepts to enable understanding of the complexity of teachers’ practices.

Teachers in the study adopted a traditional understanding of the purpose of the subjects that they taught. Mathematics and English teaching were confined to the classroom and the requirements of the curriculum. Sthe positioned him and the rest of the teachers in a vital and telling manner, and provided insight into why teachers practise in the manner that they do. For him, “*we are still from the era whereby it was dominated by rote learning and all those things. So we are all in a learning curve*” (FI). This learning curve sometimes created uncertainty about how to engage with teaching and learning where B.V., for example, questioned her decisions, “*I don’t know whether it’s correct what I did, saying that they must bring along newspapers*” and trying to give learners voice and agency over their own learning, because previously “*we focus[ed] much on things that we teachers collect, but I can see now that it’s not right*” (SI). All the teachers in the study focused on the provision of “*outcomes, what I want learners to achieve. You think of the activities that would make the learners achieve that outcome*” (Evange). The intensity of their desire to help learners achieve and meet expected outcomes is what drove their practice. In attempting to help learners access knowledge, it was vital that teachers “*start from what the learners knows, and then move on to what they don’t know*” (Ngubs, SI). Their critical understanding of their teaching context meant being responsive to learner needs, to aid understanding and entry into official and powerful knowledge structures. One of the ways was to use the life-worlds or everyday knowledge of learners, so that for learners, mathematics and English are not isolated from their environment. Teachers used **culturally relevant examples** to anchor access to disciplinary knowledge. Sthe provided an understanding of how learners can be made to think about the relevance of mathematics to their world:

a learner might be good at saying eight-times-five is forty, but if you say to the learner a woman goes to the shop and buys five [loaves of] bread and each bread [loaf] costs eight rand. How much did that woman pay. It will be difficult for that learner to answer that question because she is very much used to saying: 'eight-times-five is equal to forty'. But if we bring the real life into the classroom, they will be able to relate that even in their environment (SI).

These attempts by teachers were to empower learners “to put them in a better position of understanding” (Joel, SI).

The following example from a mathematics lesson (23/10/2012) shows how Sthe uses learners’ knowledge to enable their access into **powerful knowledge structures**. This was a lesson on graphs:

T: Remember, it’s very important to start a day with a breakfast... make no mistake: always start your day with breakfast, because breakfast helps you to focus in class, and not lose concentration. I know that some of you in their breakfast are having bread... what else?

[Teacher writes input from learners on the board].

L [shouting out in unison]: Cornflakes, weetbix, jungle oats.

T: Ok, I know we had different meals this morning, but let us take these few meals... Ok, I will do the counting, raise up your hands. Please help me put this using tallies [teacher draws a tally table. The teacher and the learners together add in the information to represent the different kinds of breakfast meals as well as the number of learners who ate this kind of meal]. How many had jungle oats?

L: Eight.

T: Who can tell me? I’ve been gathering something here. What is it that I was collecting, I was collecting something? [...] What do we call it? I’ve been asking you questions and you have been giving me correct answers. That is good... yes?

L: Information.

T: The first thing that I’ve done was collection of information... in order to collect information I’ve used what? [...] Ok, what have I done with that information?

L: Put tallies.

T: Yes. I have gathered that information using tally. Now today, I want us to do the data collection. Data simply means information. How do we handle information? How do we collect information and how do we handle information? Once we’ve collected information we **organise, represent** and **analyse** it.

The example provided was one of many that teachers felt made mathematics more relevant to learners, to accommodate and raise their interest, curiosities and questions. Everyday objects and examples were used to increase learners' readiness to move from the concrete to the abstract, and develop an appreciation of mathematical concepts. Learners were expected to use this knowledge to make sense of their own lives outside of the classroom. Teachers' understandings resemble that of empirical studies conducted by social justice education researchers like Guitérrez, (2002, 2010), Gutstein (2003, 2007) as well as researchers like Early and Norton (2014) on the importance of using the life-world knowledge and experiences of learners. Early and Norton (2014) emphasise the importance of using one of the "richest resources readily available: their students' background knowledge encoded in their mother tongue" (p. 682). By using this rich resource, learners' are acknowledged as **assets** rather than deficient (Ritchie, 2013).

Sthe however moves learners further. By using their everyday examples, he goes on to **induct** them into the official knowledge by making explicit connections to the conceptual knowledge needed for learners to understand data handling. His use and emphasis of *collection*, *organisation*, *representation* and *analysis* signals to the learners that they are learning mathematical concepts. He used this technique constantly as a means to help learners understand, visualise and make connections. Sthe encourages learning and teaching that is **rigorous** and informative, and makes use of the lived realities of his learners to engender understanding. He adapted or **recontextualised** the curriculum and lesson content and created multiple entry points into securing learner engagement with curriculum content (Ritchie, 2013). When learning about angles, for example, Zippo also used different techniques like demonstrations as a way to get learners to visualise and estimate the size of angles. Sthe played number games with learners that required them to use the four mathematical operations. Both Zippo and Sthe required learners to make protractors not only as a proactive gesture in the face of a lack of resources, but also for learners to gain clear and intimate knowledge of how to use protractors to measure angles correctly.

When teaching prepositions, Ngubs demonstrated his intricate reading of not only his classroom context, but also reflection of his own ability or lack of ability in connecting with learners. Both Ngubs and Joel were trained to be high school teachers and most of their teaching experience was in a high school. They were very aware of learners' limited language proficiency, limited knowledge of discipline-related vocabulary, and concepts (Early &

Norton, 2014) but found it difficult to navigate these constraints. The difficulty arose mostly because of their uncertainty of never quite knowing where to pitch their lessons, but they made attempts to *“come down to that level so that they are able to understand, because if I have to teach them in the way I have been teaching in high school then I am sure they would have done even more, very poor”* (Joel, SI). Ngubs involved learners in playing games that demonstrated prepositions like getting a learner to throw a ball *into* the basket. These were creative and purposive decisions that teachers made, which enabled everyday objects and life experiences to connect with learning in the classroom. In these concrete and practical ways, teachers could build on the capacities of learners and empower them in the world of powerful knowledge. This shows the awareness of what is possible in the context, given that *“learners don’t grasp content easily... it is so embarrassing when you find a child can’t count change, can’t count something even in the kitchen”* (Zippo, SI).

There is the understanding that what is important is enabling learners to access basic skills in order to *“make a difference in life”* (Zippo, SI). Zippo believed that the socially just way to respond to learners who don’t grasp content easily was to teach basic skills like counting and to leave *“creativity and inquiring minds at the tertiary level”* (SI). This was because for her, getting learners to understand how to count change or purchase bread was relevant to their real lives. Zippo justifies her thinking by again pointing to the very real issue that teachers in the study have to constantly negotiate: *“if learners don’t see it as ‘real... I don’t think they will see the need of learning maths.[...] Every time when we try to teach maths, you teach them, and you use examples like where they can see or where they can apply it to real life situations”* (SI). This was her attempt to meet learners’ expressed needs, to equip her students with the necessary skills, and to meet what, for her, were real-life skills of mathematics. These teachers were able to view the invisible community structures that have strongly shaped and dictated the lives of learners, and their attempts to use community resources to enable learners to grasp a sense of mathematics on their terms. But this also presents teachers with a dilemma in trying to navigate and negotiate what they believe would be in the best interests of learners, and to ensure that learners have access to valuable, **legitimate school knowledge** (Early & Norton, 2014).

7.3.2 Contradiction and tensions in socially just pedagogy: *“Sometimes you need to make a decision that that is for the outside and I can’t do much really but here in the class I can”*

Whilst teachers in the above narratives found novel ways to increase learner motivation and interest through the use of everyday concepts or culturally relevant examples, this section details the struggles teachers have in making pedagogical decisions that best ensure social justice and equity. Teachers were unsure of whether or not to use English and mathematics to help learners challenge oppression and inequality and transform their contexts. The narratives below reveal the uncertainty and difficulty that surrounded teachers’ practices of social justice. Data reveals this as a pragmatic orientation based on their understandings of learners needs. To this end, analysis revealed that both these subjects are strongly classified. Zippo believed that mathematics could address issues like *“poverty if you teach a child maybe to sell something that will help them to improve”* (SI). For B.V., engaging with social issues was mostly about providing learners with opportunities to practise their communication and writing skills. Joel did not believe that learners could engage critically with these issues, mostly because, *“these learners some of them cannot understand some of the things because of their age”* (SI). Evange also indicated that using bar graphs, for example, could enable learners to see...

...the percentage of the youth that is involved in the drugs and also there and the danger that goes with that. I don’t really allow to talk about certain issues in the class because... but you know the issue of syllabus as I have said and knowing that you have got to teach mathematics and the concept... but I try to limit it. Sometimes you need to make a decision that that is for the outside and I can’t do much really but here in the class I can, so I concentrate on that (SI).

For teachers, issues prevalent in their community were used for a particular purpose, to help learners make the necessary connections between mathematical ideas, and their practical everyday life. Thus, teachers wanted students to learn dominant mathematical concepts with deep conceptual understanding that were important for academic settings. Bernstein (2000; 1996) has argued that disciplinary knowledge is different to everyday knowledge that learners bring with them. For him, the everyday or **horizontal discourse** was local and contextual and its relevance remains contextually bound. Teachers, in attempting to empower learners, use both **specialised knowledge** and the **everyday funds of knowledge** in a socially just manner,

to enable understanding and access to specialised knowledge (Gutstein, 2007; Zipin, 2009; Zipin, et al, 2012; Zipin, 2013). This is because teachers recognise that learners need to be inducted into a field of disciplinary knowledge, and thus gain sophisticated ways of using this knowledge which horizontal knowledge structures do not provide (Wheelan, 2007).

This is contrary to how teaching for social justice is envisioned – where mathematics should be used as a tool to **critically engage and transform society** (Valero, 2001, 2002; Gutiérrez, 2002; Gutstein, 2007a). Teachers here do not teach learners to question and challenge dominant inequality, or to use mathematics in politically informed ways to challenge and transform society. Whilst learners are able to learn about the percentage of youth involvement in drugs and the dangers thereof or ways to sell goods to overcome poverty, they are not required to question why poverty exists or tackle political issues of access to rehabilitation for drug addicts in poor communities. They focus on the provision of knowledge for education *“that learners must pass and stick to the work.”*

Evange has specific understanding of the purpose of mathematics, and for him he limits engaging with social issues. He prioritises ensuring that learners have access to the knowledge set by the syllabus and deflects from drawing learners to engage critically in understanding the political dimensions of inequity and oppression (Gutiérrez, 2002). This may have the effect of learners believing that learning and subjects like mathematics are neutral in both practice and consequence. Teachers’ utterances indicate that they have control over what occurs within the confines of the classroom, and that sometimes, decisions have to be made about where one can use skills to empower learners: *“for the outside... I can’t do much really but here in the class I can, so I concentrate on that* (Evange, SI). Teachers here do not seek to challenge and transform society through political understanding, but rather through practical ways in which they can transform the lives of their learners within the classroom. Evange understands that the classroom must be a safe space, free of the overwhelming injustice that learners experience in their home lives. It is in the classroom that he allows learners to find voice and have a sense of agency and efficacy (Ritchie, 2013). Here, the teachers want to empower learners through ensuring that they meet the criteria of achievement and success sanctioned by the dominant education system.

However, I think that teachers here follow what Brantlinger (2007) calls **traditional pedagogy**. The manner in which teachers practise equity is complex and varied, and the

decisions that teachers make are to support marginalised learners. What is consistent however is the rationale that teachers are constantly making attempts to provide equitable access to mathematics and English in the hope that it will expand the future life possibilities for learners. This remains implicit in teachers' work through the teaching of skills for learners to negotiate the schooling context, not their broader environmental context. The transference of official or vertical knowledge to other contexts and other situations is seemingly complex and tentative. Whilst culturally relevant pedagogy is used to access part of this knowledge, the trade-off of allowing learners to engage with socio-political understandings of the real world is deemed too high, at the expense of disciplinary knowledge (Brantlinger, 2007). There is, instead, a combination of social justice mathematics pedagogy and traditional pedagogy, where teachers in some way work towards considering how mathematics is not neutral, but bound up with power, status and privilege. In allowing learners to co-construct knowledge, to learn about different methods or approaches, working collaboratively and allowing learners voices to be heard is their way of forwarding social justice pedagogy. What this also shows is that traditionally teachers have a particular understanding of how to teach mathematics, but in attempting to make mathematics more relevant to learners, teachers are making the necessary adjustments to their practice.

However, teachers' practices and biographical narratives reinforce dominant knowledge construction or vertical knowledge structures (Bernstein, 1996, 2000). The question that prevails and is vital to social justice and equity is, whose knowledge? (Zipin, Fataar & Brennan, 2015). For example, Evange's understanding of 'justice' is that he must provide learners with the necessary academic knowledge to gain the cultural capital needed to be affirmed in society, and within the schooling context. However, this knowledge cannot liberate and transform society (Ladson Billings, 1995a). This is a vital understanding and what is revealed here is the understanding of how teachers are products of their own history that reinforce these dominant constructions. Zippo indicates that her learners are not capable of answering critical questions, and in her teaching she does not ask learners this because, she states:

You know [...] the way we were taught, really it contributes. We were not allowed to ask the teacher. So the teacher always tells you this, and this, and this; but we were not given that opportunity to ask. Maybe that one contributes, because you know the teacher always engaged learners in such way. It is thus not necessarily that (SI).

This understanding is problematic for Gutiérrez (2002, p.168), who understands this as **glamourizing individual meaning-making**, without the realisation that the social context, and their learning subjects are power-laden spaces. In giving learners agency, voice and access only within the confines of the school, it reinforces the inequality that learners will continue to face. Historical inequalities will continue to be reinforced and future generations will be subject to this inequality as well. But teachers here have to negotiate a complex path, and in making the decisions based on their own histories, but having learners gain the necessary academic knowledge without extending learner's agentic voice to challenge oppression and oppressive structures, results in the continued privileging of dominant voices. This agential voice is restricted and confined, and does not enable a belief in their own ability (Gutiérrez, 2002; Ritchie, 2013).

This could also account for the inability to realise that **imagined community**. Learners are unable to see the relevance and purpose of English and mathematics in their lives; and they do not value specialised academic knowledge (Bernstein, 2000). Whilst learners may have access to knowledge that has purchase in broader society, it does not equip them to address societal injustice and inequity within their own communities. Learners are unable to use their knowledge to understand social issues present in their own community and to learn how to negotiate that environment. It points to the lip-service and illusion prevalent in policy and public discourse that expect teachers to teach particular kinds of knowledge that are restricted to a few, without redistributing knowledge that enables the development of a critical stance rooted in social justice.

7.3.3 The contradictions of foregrounding life-world knowledge

The lesson below (26/10/2012) provides an example of a teacher who attempts to use the life-worlds or culturally relevant knowledge of learners as means to **co-construct knowledge** and critically engage with the topic 'sugar daddies and HIV'. This lesson is an illustration of the difficulty implicit in using culturally relevant knowledge in meaningful ways that provide learners with access to rigorous, intellectually demanding forms of thought. This results in the trivialisation of culturally relevant knowledge (Sleeter, 2012) and where such knowledge is not seen as a pedagogical resource for epistemic access. What this lesson also depicts is the way in which pedagogical discourse and decision-making determine what kind of learning opportunities are made available, and how sometimes, teachers read the world of learners incorrectly. This leads to a sense of disquiet on the part of the teacher. Here, learners engage

in the topic in unreflective ways that produce no real sense-making (Gutstein, et al., 1997), but their utterances are reflective of understandings that are produced in the community. The lesson not only fails to create intellectually and socially empowering educational experiences, but is also indicative of the disconnect between the environment, school and teachers. It evinces the uncertainty of teaching in marginalised contexts.

Ghettoh believed that using learners' knowledge as a starting point was vital to knowledge acquisition, and that learners' background knowledge was a valuable resource or sources of classroom knowledge. The lesson itself was in the form of a debate (oral discussion). The topic of the lesson was selected by the teacher, and was thus strongly framed by the question: 'should we date older people being youngsters or teenagers?' Learners were put into groups not of their choosing, and were given evaluative criteria that detailed procedural and regulative social interaction criteria, namely we knew what to do, we listened to the chairperson, we took turns in discussion and we ask questions and agreed with members for correct points. After discussion, each learner on opposite sides gave input in the form of a sentence, after which it was the turn of the next learner.

L1: It is good to date a 'sugar daddy', because he can give you a baby, day by day, to get the do social grant.²⁴

T: Ok, floor speakers do you have a question to ask them, any of them? Yes, Zulu?

Zulu from floor posing a question to fourth speaker: Why do you say you want to have many children – because they will confuse your mind?

L1: Because I want the money.

T: Oh, you want money from the foster grant from government?

L1: Yes.

T: How much per month?

L1: R270.

T: So the more kids have, the more money you think you will have?

L2: It is not good to date sugar mamas and sugar daddies, because he will want to sleep you and you end up with HIV.

²⁴ Child Support Grant for pregnant teenagers. The above extract discusses the popular speculation that girls fall pregnant to get this grant.

T: And end up with leaving you with HIV. Ooh! that's a good one. Yes? This topic is hot isn't it? They use you, you know that. They use you, but they also abuse you - you know that's an abuse?

Some learners: Yes.

Nomfundo: It is not abuse if you want it. [Learners laugh]

T: They what? Come again Nomfundo.

N: It is not an abuse if you want it.

T: Oh my goodness! To be parent is too difficult these days. All right. Let's hear your point my girl.

Zulu: What if the man takes with the car and drive to Ethekwini and rape you there with his friend?

Nomfundo: that's what I like [learners laugh and joke again].

T: Ok, I don't have to comment at this point in time. I will leave it like that. Ok is that all you wanted to say?

Here there is emphasis on the learners' **horizontal knowledge/everyday knowledge/culturally relevant knowledge** (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c; Bernstein, 1996, 2000). There is no understanding on the part of the learners about the **specialised knowledge** required in a debate, which the teacher alludes to by dividing the learners into opposing sides, and indicating to them: *"the people that are saying no must be on one side and others must be on the other side, so that they won't catch your point"*. This, however, is not explicit, and learners lose out on an important opportunity to learn academic debating skills, the process of argumentation and valid and appropriate justification, as well as the appropriateness of register. These criteria do not form part of the teachers' evaluation criteria. The lesson seems to be more about *"fun"* where learners are encouraged by the teacher to *"say anything. You have freedom"*. Sequencing is also weakly framed, with learners making the decisions about the content and flow of the lesson. The teacher has also not supplied the necessary **scaffolding/sequencing** and support or logical progression that is needed to critically engage with a topic that is more relevant to the everyday experiences of learners. Here, the teacher does not engage with social justice and equity pedagogy criteria in transforming the life-worlds of learners.

Bernstein (2000) indicates that there is a distinction between **vertical and horizontal** discourses, not only in terms of structure, but also in terms of how they are acquired. Vertical discourse is taught explicitly, and there are **distributive rules** which will determine who has access to it. Here, given that no knowledge was taught, learners could not access it and thus

remain marginalised in the learning process. Whilst the teacher makes use of an example from the everyday world of learners, it is to the detriment of powerful knowledge acquisition (Young, 2008). Vertical knowledge in this case has become subsumed by horizontal knowledge, and knowledge gained is irrelevant to the schooling context, remaining only relevant to the community in which learners reside. The teacher has failed to provide her learners with valuable opportunities to learn the necessary subject content, speaking and debating skills, as well as skills of reasoning and justification pertinent to the curricula goals. Key to critical skill acquisition is for learners to be able to explain their reasoning and to expand their communication repertoire (Boaler, 2002). The teacher fails to question or provide opportunities for learners to ask critical questions. There is a **code clash** between teachers' beliefs and learners' beliefs, with learners' everyday discourses taking precedence (Freebody, Maton & Martin, 2008).

All Ghettoh can do is respond in a socio-emotive manner indicating, "*Oh my goodness, to be a parent is too difficult these days.*" A learner then attempts to interject and pose a question that requires more thoughtful processing: "*what if the man takes you with the car and drive to Ethekwini and rape you there with his friend?*", but it is ignored. Vital opportunities are lost to enhance debating skills and co-constructing knowledge and justification (Hall, 2002; Joseph, 2013). Learners' responses themselves are emotive, highly personal, colloquial and subjective. They have taken the topic under discussion and **recontextualised** it, using the frame of their own everyday experience, and respond accordingly, using language more appropriate to community settings and within peer groups. This could be attributed to their need to assert some form of agency over the lesson, given that they were not allowed to choose their teams. From the lesson, however, it would seem that students are locked into what Maton (2009) refers to as '**student as knower code**', where knowledge learned in this lesson cannot be transferred beyond the lesson. Failing to provide learners with the necessary knowledge in which to learn the **rules of the game** is, in effect, a reproduction of existing inequality. This understanding is in keeping with Boaler (2002), and Hoadley's (2009) studies, which reveal that working-class learners need to be inducted into school knowledge and meaning-making if they are to be successful in school.

According to the evaluative criteria set down by the teacher, the learners show both **recognition and realisation** of rules, because they have produced the legitimate text

appropriate to the social interaction required. The teacher has given them **explicit evaluation criteria**, telling them:

It's not about marks. Marks yes, but what I'm checking. If you look here what I've said, LO 1 says 'listening' – I'm checking your listening skills. Do you listen to other people? And here LO 2, 'speaking' – are you able to speak out or to speak to other people? Then here, I say 'I want you to share, you discuss, you talk in the group'. Are you able to talk to others, to discuss, are you able to share your ideas? Are you able to be active in the group? Are you talking? You understand what I'm saying.

Learners have acquired the necessary social competences required for the group work selected. This however is not the same for competence with regard to academic knowledge. Whilst the teacher may regard using the everyday knowledge of learners to help learners understand school knowledge, this example shows how everyday knowledge cannot complement school knowledge. Nonetheless, social justice theorists working within culturally relevant approaches (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c; Zipin, et al., 2015) would also argue that culturally relevant knowledge has not been used effectively, and if anything, reinforces community knowledge as deficit, and should therefore not be used within the classroom. What the lesson above is representative of, according to Zipin et al. (2015), is the “banal sort that South African OBE curriculum represented” (p. 25). These researchers would argue quite strongly that this lesson is not representative of the funds of knowledge, or that it is a culturally relevant approach at all. However, if one examines what learners are saying, they are providing in-depth knowledge of what occurs within their communities. In failing to provide learners with the necessary skills, the teacher has in effect failed to provide them with knowledge of how to negotiate issues within their context. The learners have not been exposed to intellectual and ethically sound ways in which to engage with knowledge that is both powerful and culturally relevant (Zipin, et al., 2015). Thus learners are exposed to double disempowerment, not acquiring knowledge to negotiate school as well as the community.

However, the complexity of the teachers' practice ought not to be dismissed; instead, it is necessary to understand the deeper rationale that emphasises the challenges of teaching learners who 'shocked' the teacher with their knowledge of sexual politics. What is evident is her positionality of being uncertain of how to respond to learners' knowledge and where the

life-worlds of the teacher and the learners clash. Ghettoh's embodied teacher identity is different to that of her learners. She finds herself lost and unable to proceed pedagogically. Her choice of the topic was a controversial one, and she acknowledges her failure to read learners' cultural knowledge effectively. Her **Christian identity** and present practice show her that she is different to her learners, where she argues: "*how can I at my age expect such things, because I was not exposed*" (Ghettoh, SI). Her reasoning for the choice of the topic was to enable learners to understand more about HIV and AIDS. She had also thought that learners would be more thoughtful and critically engaging, because this was a topic that she had taught them during the life-orientation lesson.

Here, her reading of the social world of the learners was inaccurate, and she expressed feeling a sense of **disequilibrium, disconnection and uncertainty** regarding the lives of learners. Her silences, gasps of horror, her facial expression of disbelief and her utterances are evident of this. Her attempts to use culturally relevant examples to encourage meaning-making, and the engagement learners pursued with her left her confused. She did not know how to respond appropriately and her initial pedagogical goal of getting learners to debate and collectively construct knowledge through critical engagement was lost. Knowledge or information presented is based more on learners' knowledge and experience, which is very different from her own knowledge and from her pedagogical goal. This is also evident in the time spent on this, where she is even unable to reflect on the lesson with learners.

Field notes from the next day reveal her attempts at negotiating this pedagogical mishap and wield her pedagogical authority to negotiate curricular goals. She attempted to get learners to think more critically about these social issues by preparing a lesson on decision-making and problem-solving. In an attempt to get learners to engage more critically, she focused on the decisions one makes to, for example, smoke or take alcohol. She extends it further by getting learners to co-construct knowledge with her and the class, about the consequences to decisions that one makes. She refers to the debate, indicating that "*the debate was meant to teach you about decision and consequences*". Here, her Christian upbringing and her role as steward play a part in how she handles the discussion and she uses these as resources to get learners to engage in critical dialogue, where for example, throughout the lesson she urges them to "*think of your future*". Her teaching takes on a moral tone, often making attempts to influence learners about the consequences of alcohol and sex. These are pragmatic and strategic decisions that are intended to help and empower learners. This is in keeping with the

role she believes that she has, namely that of God's steward, meant to guide and protect. Her decision to teach in this manner is based on what she believes is her responsibility to learners, given their context and her knowledge thereof, but also to establish dialogue.

She attempts to **re-inhabit** a place that was lost to her. According to Perumal (2015, p. 26) re-inhabitation involves "affirming and creating cultural knowledge that protects people and place". Here, Ghettoh attempts to re-inhabit a place where her role as steward to protect her learners influences her decisions to direct learners to careful decision-making. She is part of a community project that deals with these issues, often going into the community to help learners who are chronically ill. She is at the forefront of helping learners who have been devastated by HIV/AIDS. These are her attempts to get learners to think more critically, given the pandemic of HIV and the fact that in the school itself, there are many learners affected and are orphaned. This becomes her crusade and her moral purpose. She wants to empower learners with the knowledge that making decisions involves a thought process and the consequences of not thinking through things can have significant impact.

7.4 Factors that Prevent Learners from Accessing Quality Education

In this section, I provide insight into the factors that prevented learners from being able to access quality education. The teachers in the study made attempts to help learners achieve success, but these were sometimes unsuccessful. This resulted in learners being unable to access knowledge and skills that are vital to acquiring the cultural and social capital necessary for them to navigate schooling.

7.4.1 Teachers' lack of specialised knowledge: "*With poetry I don't know if I am strong*"

Fleisch (2008), Taylor (2008), van der Berg (2008), Shalem and Hoadley (2009), Sayed and Ahmed (2011), Sayed and Motala (2012) have respectively indicated that South African schooling is deeply unequal, and results in differential access to specialised knowledge, given the history of schooling in South Africa. I use Shalem and Hoadley's (2009) concept of **organisational assets** to show how this unequal schooling system is maintained and reproduced, because of differential access to **specialised knowledge**. These researchers indicate that organisational assets are, for example, specialised knowledge and curriculum. They indicate that evidence shows major "disparity amongst teachers in terms of their initial training, access to quality in-service learners and, as a result, great variation in terms of teachers' level of subject knowledge" (Shalem & Hoadley, 2009, p. 125). Effective curriculum practices demand that teachers have deep understanding of teaching methodology,

evaluation practices, the designing of meaningful tasks that allow the acquisition of deep conceptual knowledge, that questioning levels focus on higher-order thinking skills, so as to enable positive learning outcomes for learners (Shalem & Hoadley, 2009). But access to adequate training historically and at present has been challenging.

This understanding is acknowledged by teachers in this study and the following lesson excerpt is an example of a teacher's lack of specialised knowledge that has negative consequences for learners' learning. Ngubs indicated that for him, "*poem[s] is one of the difficult things to teach*". He placed the blame of being unable to teach it on his own lack of ability, saying: "*with poetry, I don't know if I am strong. All I know is that learners are struggling with that. Maybe the problem is on me*" (FI). He found it difficult to get learners to understand the complexity of poetry, its difficult language, critical engagement that is required and the recognition and significance of poetic devices, which learners could "*not pick out in the poem*". This was compounded by his lack of understanding of the CAPS document, where he "*had been trying to following it, but that sometimes you know, I don't know, you get confused*" (SI). Lesson observations, interviews and field notes revealed that his understanding of the curriculum related to using workbooks like the *Foundations for Learning*, using textbooks to find activities, but with little understanding of how curriculum works, or the sequencing and scaffolding of knowledge and activities that enabled learning but he acknowledged that he did need to "*undergo further studies*" (SI).

His lack of professional knowledge and sense of loss of agency in response to a government that failed to respond to teachers, was compounded by being disgruntled with learners who he felt lacked motivation, and had implications for his practice. Delpit (1988) and Ladson-Billings (1995) have argued that it is imperative that teachers problematise and engage critically with curriculum content, and that they reflect on their own ability to meet the needs of marginalised students. Teachers need to be able to present the curriculum in ways that are beneficial to learners' success. Ngubs' source of support was his head of department, as well as the subject advisor, who he felt were able to help him. Data, however, reveals that ineffective and inadequate curriculum-training and knowledge continue to play a part in his inability to meet the needs of learners. This lack of specialised knowledge has dire consequences for his learners, who fail to acquire the necessary legitimate knowledge.

In this lesson (11/10/2012), the teacher begins by selecting the poem for the learners who are in Grade Seven, from the textbook. He then proceeds to read the poem out twice to the learners. The third time, learners are asked to read with him.

The Earth God
Birds flutter in the breeze
Singing in the trees
Swooping to pick up worms from the earth so dear
Animals big and small
In and out among the trees
Sprinting through the grass
Forest and grass their happy home
Fish swish through the water, in the river
Deep in the sea.
Man with his buildings bus and trains
Lord over them all.

T: I want us to read it together so that we can pronounce the words correctly
[This is followed by intense repetition of words throughout the lesson].

T: This is worm. Let us all say 'worm'.

L [in unison]: Worm.

This followed by chorus-like repetition of what a teacher wants learners to answer.

T: With a poem. Specifically, with a poem, there is a language that the poem always uses when the poem [poet] writes. He uses figures of speech. So when you read a poem you will come across with what figures of speech? Specifically with poem, a particular language he uses. He uses figures of speech. What does he use?

All: Figures of speech.

T: Don't confuse this with parts of speech. Here, we are talking about figures of speech. Teachers writes on the board 'figures of speech' and 'parts of speech'. Can you see the different [pointing to the words on the board].

L: Yes, sir.

Questions asked of learners require one word answers, or yes/no, or a simple sentence, e.g. creator of all things. The lesson proceeds in this manner, with teacher directing the lesson, and asking the question. Often he asks questions and this is followed by silence.

T: Can you mention some of big animals that you know of?

L 1: Lion.

T: Is the lion big?

L 2: No.

T: Have you seen a lion? Have you been to the zoo? Yes it is big, but when we say big we haven't looked at the degrees of comparison big, bigger, and biggest. Then we can say the lion is big, and yes that animal is bigger, and that one is the biggest. But we are not doing the degree of comparison. Okay? Yes the lion is big. Yes it is one of the biggest animals on earth.

L 1: Rhino.

L 2: Zebra.

L 3: Tiger.

[The teacher then proceeds to go through the poem with the learners. He informs the learners what figures of speech are, "*language that is used by a poem a very tough language sometimes*" telling learners what figures of speech are].

T: So these birds singing in the trees. So we talk about a figure of speech. Can birds sing?

Learners: [in unison]: No.

T: No they cannot sing. They make a particular noise, but they are not singing, because they are not human beings. Only human beings can sing. Am I right?

Learners: [in unison]: Yes.

T: What figure of speech is singing in the trees? The poet says birds are singing in the trees –what figure of speech is it? (No answer).

T: That is personification. In this case, the poet pretends as if the birds can do the things that can be done by man, when they cannot. Right. Swooping to pick up the worms. Do you know birds feed themselves on insects? On worms, especially when it is raining like this [actions] and the worms come up. Birds swoop the will just fly down to pick them up. Like a hawk or an eagle. Their prey. Do you know what prey means? Not this 'pray' [Teacher shows to pray] this one: 'prey'.

The lesson proceeds in this way for the duration of the lesson. The activity that the teacher gives learners is for them to get into groups and each group to discuss a stanza. The first group was required to make a list of five birds, the second group to list the names of animals known as the big five, and the last group to list the names of five types of fish. Learners are told that they have 10 minutes, but the students take only five minutes, after which they present in the front of the class.

I coded the **selection, sequencing, pacing** and **evaluation** as F++, or strongly framed. The entire lesson was under the control of Ngubs, who makes determinations about what knowledge is to be taught, how that knowledge is transmitted, as well at the rate of the transmission. It must be noted that given the low cognitive demand of the lesson, the pacing of the lesson is slow, but it is under the control and direction of Ngubs. The lesson is characterised by the procedure of going through the poem stanza by stanza, with very little in

the way of deeper conceptual understanding. Dooley (2003) uses the term **substantive conversation** to refer to the intellectual quality of the lesson. For intellectual quality to be achieved, learners must be able to use and transform the knowledge that they have learned and to communicate it in meaningful and substantial ways. For this to occur substantive conversation is imperative and the use of higher-order thinking skills is vital to the production of enhanced and deep conceptual understanding.

In the lesson, the learners have not learned about vital aspects of how to deconstruct and analyse poems. They do not have understanding, for example of poetic devices, because Ngugi merely informed them of it. This is indicative of the understanding that he has knowledge of poetic devices, but finds that he is unable to teach these to learners. Learners were not provided with an explanation of figures of speech, and even when the teacher pointed to the two phrases, 'figures of speech' and 'parts of speech', there is no explanation or even inquiry from learners of the difference between the two. In order for learners to gain access to deep conceptual knowledge, they needed to have an understanding of the content of the entire poem, they needed to have an understanding of poetic devices, and how these operate and provide meaning to the poem, and there is very little in the way of an explanation of the theme of the poem. The teacher focuses on pronunciation in keeping with his construction of an ideal learner, who can speak English well, and the lesson itself seems to be devoid of instructional content, with learners being required to answer cognitively poor questions. Learners do not have control over and even access to knowledge with all the control being located within the teacher and the textbook and none in the learners. Figures of speech are defined by the teacher as a "*very tough language*", which they must have knowledge of to interpret particular words.

He presents an explanation of personification but does not give learners the time and space to think about personification and neither does he provide them with the opportunity to identify further examples to enable deeper conceptual understanding of an English language construct. In this manner, the lack of access to opportunities and knowledge has resulted in learners being disadvantaged and silenced. The lack of student participation and voice results in learners becoming **doers of knowledge** and is evident in their failure to understand. For Ngugi, learner responses, even simple yes/no ones, correspond with participation, but here, participation has been reduced to hearing without substance. The activity that the teacher gives the learners is one that does not assess the learners' grasp of the poem. The activity

does not correspond with the lesson itself, and all learners are required to do is make a list of five animals, fish and birds. There is no link between content, evaluation and learning outcomes. Learners are not required to make a **cognitive shift** from what they know, as evident in the activity feedback and what new knowledge could be learned from the poem (Hoadley, 2007). Instead, there is reproduction of what is already within the understanding of the learners.

I found it difficult to code the evaluation criteria effectively using Bernstein's framework. This is because, whilst knowledge is being taught according to the lesson outcomes and the requirements of the poem, there is no substantial knowledge being learned. Thus it is empty of substance. Because of this, there is also no effective evaluation and so evaluation is neither weak nor strong. What is being assessed, however, is irrelevant, has a low cognitive demand, but sadly, provides learners with the understanding that they have achieved knowledge, when in fact they have not. This realisation echoes that of Hoadley (2006), who devised an F⁰ (zero) category to show when evaluative criteria do not relate to the actual instructional discourse. There is a strong display of teacher control through the activities directed by the teacher, which does not provide learners with the means to develop independence. Through strong teacher control, learner identities are fashioned as passive and dependent on the teacher (Dooley, 2003). Whilst the classroom is characterised by apparent attentiveness to the teachers, there is a lack of **student engagement** on a cognitive level (Munns, 2007). Not only are learners' personal identities constructed in this manner, but the English subject is constructed in particular contradictory ways. On the one hand, it is both abstract and difficult, but it is also repetitive, and demands little from learners. This kind of **fragmented knowledge** fails to provide learners with access into the official discourse of the curriculum (Player-Koro, 2011).

7.4.2 Poor cognitive demand in lessons: “*Otherwise they end up understanding not a single thing*”

Slamat (2009) indicates that teachers “have a duty to induct students into **critical thinking**” (p. 1156). Classroom lesson observation revealed the difficulty, tensions and contradictions of teachers' instructional practices of helping learners acquire criticality and in teachers' reading of the world of learners (Freire, 1985). As previously stated, teachers practised from a position of uncertainty, which sometimes led to inequitable learning outcomes. Their understanding was informed by their experiences of learners in the classroom. She pointed to the institutional disadvantage of poor teaching that a learner is exposed to from Grade R and

the unfairness of being held accountable for “*damages that was done by the teacher in Grade R or teacher in Grade Three*” (SI). He also provided an understanding of the disjuncture between teacher-training, and practice and insight into the prevailing deficit discourses underpinning teaching. He had attended a workshop where one of the teachers indicated that teachers were like “*mechanics who have been trained to fix or deal with a BMW only to be given a Fiat Uno to deal with. That person is struggling because BMW is technologically advanced compared to Uno. He was referring to our kids you see. The standards of our kids is declining*” (SI). This prevailing thought translated itself into practice, and was evidenced by the low cognitive demands of lessons and low level questioning I observed. I analysed the questioning levels according to Bloom’s Taxonomy, in order to understand the questioning practices of teachers. Hoadley (2007, 2012), Chin (2008) and Slamati (2009) indicate that providing learners with opportunities to access higher-thinking order skills is imperative not only to increased participation, but also help learners to understand how knowledge is constructed.

- 1. Knowledge questions:** the focus was on recall, asking students questions relating to who, what, when, where and how. I also grouped questions that invoked choral responses of yes/no, or repetition of what teachers had indicated in this category. These I refer to as low level questions.
- 2. Comprehension questions:** these questions required the learner to be able to interpret and reorganise material.
- 3. Application Questions:** these required that the learner take knowledge already learnt and to apply these to explain for example relationships, ideas and characters.
- 4. Analysis level Questions:** these required that students relate, make connections and explore their thinking. The learner is able to identify reasons and make inferences. These were regarded as high level questions.
- 5. Synthesis Questions:** Here, the learner is required to form something new out of what he/she has learned, in order to propose alternative solutions.
- 6. Evaluation level questions:** These kinds of questions required that learners justify their thought process and defend their ideas. These were also regarded as high level questions.

Below is a table that reflects the kinds of questions that were asked by the various teachers in the three lessons that were observed:

Teacher	Knowledge	Compre- hension	Apply	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
Sthe	47	22	22	7	5	1
Zippo	36	35	35	6		
Evange	44	22	34	29	6	12
Ngubs	36	16	9			
Joel	45	11	1			
B.V.	69	33	11			
Ghettoh	202	48	12			

Table 3: Levels of Questioning

The above table reveals that most questions asked required **low cognitive** level thinking from the students (mostly yes/no questions), questions that required them to give back information already given and **choral responses**. These also include questions that teachers asked and answered themselves. In the follow-up interview, I asked teachers about their level of questioning, and in particular, the focus on asking learners questions that were mostly knowledge-type questions. Joel, for example, expressed surprise and a lack of awareness. Observation revealed that the English classroom contexts were mostly authoritative and characterised largely by teacher-talk. Evange's, and to some extent Sthe's and Zippo's classrooms, were dialogical in nature, and learners were encouraged to provide ideas, justification, debate and explore different points of view. Evange in particular let the learners take the lead in his lesson, and thus, many of the times learners asked him questions, or asked their peers questions, when they were at the front providing an explanation of their answers. This was not included in the observation tabled above. This, to some extent, was also indicative of Sthe's lessons. Sthe's lessons often involved group or paired work and then explanation in the front of the class.

Straehler-Pohl, Fernández, Gellert and Figueiras (2014) have indicated that teachers' expectations of learners are influenced by discourses surrounding the ability of certain groups of learners. These prevailing societal and institutional discourses are embedded in the educational practices of teachers. Within the school, English was positioned as problematic by teachers and often this idea was translated into their classroom practice. Bernstein (1996)

indicates that the manner in which knowledge is distributed is reflective of the manner in which society is constructed. Teachers in the study forwarded understandings of their practices that showed dilemmas and tension and went against what they felt were good teaching practices. They recognised, for example, that scaling down or dumbing down the curriculum reinforced and limited the opportunities for learners. The lesson (09/10/2012) below shows the manner in which the classroom discourse is structured, which reinforced inequality, and was constraining on learners' ability to achieve and gain the necessary cultural capital for learning

T: If you look at your papers, what is there that you see?
L: It is a boxer.
T: That is a boxer, yes, and he is doing what?
Ls [in unison]: Fight.
L: Box.
T: Yes, they are boxing, isn't it, and what else do you see?
L: I see a swimmer.
T: Oh yes, you see a swimmer. Yes, a swimmer. Do you know how to swim boys and girls?
L: Yes.
T: Do you recognise that person there? Do you know that person that is swimming? Yes, my boy, what is the name of the person? Tell me... tell me.
L: The name of the swimmer is Du Toit.
T: That is her surname, what is her name? Anyone? It starts with an 'N'.
[No response]
T: She is Natalie du Toit. What, boys and girls?
L: Natalie du Toit.
[Teacher reads the comprehension passage about Natalie du Toit, her life story, and her participation in the Olympics. Story itself makes use of concepts like 'normal' and 'disabled']
T: Right. If I may ask you boys and girls, when did we have the Olympics this year, around what time this year that Natalie du Toit participated in? When was the Olympics this year? When was the Olympics this year, when?
L: In London.
T: Yes, it was in London, around what time? It is now October isn't it... around what time?

L: In July.

T: July? Yes July. Can you remember when exactly, what date? It was in July, but what day? You have been sitting at home and watching it. I want to see if you were watching it. It started on the 27th of July 2012, and ended...? Can someone tell me when it ended? We now know it started on the 27 July and when did it ended? [No response]. It ended on the... on the 12th of August 2012. The Olympics takes places every four years. When are we going to have the next Olympics, because every four years? After four years, they will have the Olympics.

L: 2016.

T: 2016, 2016, 2016?

L: 2014.

T: No.

L: 2015.

T: No, is that four years? It means that you have to start counting now. Teacher counts on his fingers, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016. So it means we will have it in 2017. But there is something about the Olympics that is very important, and that is that we have the Olympics for the ordinary people and the Olympics, the people who are not disabled people who are not disabled. Now how do you know a disabled person? What are the characters of a disabled person? How can you see that person and say that person is disabled? What is the difference between a disabled person and a normal person? Maybe let me frame my question that way. Yes.

L: A disabled person doesn't have a leg, and another one, no arm.

Teacher then questions learners on aspects in the lesson for example: How many medals did she get? Learners guess the answer. He then asks learners to guess the names of other Olympians and provides them with clues e.g. this boy comes from a school called Westville Boys School?

[Learners do not respond. Learners are then put into groups to answer questions based on the passage. Learners are required to respond orally to the questions, but after the third question, the teacher gets side-tracked and moves on to discuss when the next Olympics will be held and where. The lesson itself takes 39 minutes. Joel leaves the classroom and learners continue with little understanding of what to do, and noise erupts.]

The entire lesson is characterised by teacher questions and learner responses. Questions posed to learners require a yes/no response, one word and sometimes a simple sentence. The question-answer process is also characterised by **chanting**, or repetition of the words the teacher wants. These findings echo those of Hoadley (2008), where chorusing and chanting were strategies employed by teachers to disguise their inability to teach effectively, and lack of required content in the specific subject area. The questions and content that Joel introduces learners to, lack connection to curricular content at the grade-appropriate level. These were Grade Five learners. The focus is on generating discussion around general knowledge rather

than comprehension skills, thinking and reasoning, understanding of the main idea and linking.

Whilst there is active participation, the cognitive demand is low. **Active participation** in this lesson is characterised by all the learners responding to the questions. However, the questions do not require much thought and knowledge and thus whilst learners are actively participating there is very little curriculum knowledge being accessed. Active participation is therefore a **myth**, and renders the knowledge of the lesson alienating to learners. Learners are not provided with support to make meaning of the passage. The written activity expects learners to have acquired knowledge, but Joel did not provide learners with the necessary conceptual and linguistic prompts needed to complete the activity.

Questions asked focused on repetition of information or the recalling of facts and thus lacked ‘**cognitive and knowledge complexity**’ (Hugo, Bertram, Green & Naidoo, 2008) suited for the grade and the lesson. The academic resource or worksheet served no purpose, because it was used with little, if any effect. Learners were not given the space and time to go through the passage paragraph-by-paragraph, where questions could be asked to enable understanding of themes, vocabulary and meaning. What is likely to be achieved by this kind of **disengaged instruction** (Hoadley, 2003) is the reinforcing of the ambivalent relationship that learners have with English, their repeated lack of success, and a devaluing of the language as one that will empower them. If classrooms are characterised by low **cognitive demand** and unclear pedagogical goals and interest, it is understandable that there is no imagined community of English for learners. Given the active participation, learners display interest and motivation, but they are given no opportunity to learn, and to gain the necessary skills needed for participation in the curriculum. The end result is the reproduction of disadvantage and perpetuation of failure, where “*90 percent of them are really struggling with English and other subjects*” (Joel, SI).

The issue of low cognitive demand was discussed with teachers in the second interview and Joel, for example, expressed shock “*was it, was it at a very low level?*” (SI). This was because he believed that his high school experience may have caused him to be unsure of the level at which to pitch lessons. But he taught at that level “*otherwise they end up understanding not a single thing*” (SI). But reducing the cognitive demand of the lessons, according to Boaler and Staples, (2008) will continue to add to teachers’ frustrations, because

this would then become a common occurrence within the school, and lead to compounded disadvantage for learners. Learners' ability or lack thereof then becomes an explicit marker that classifies them as having low ability that is external to the teacher, but internal to the learners.

Teachers in the study believed that in lowering the standard of learning in the classroom, they expected that this would promote all students learning. Both B.V. and Ghettoh expressed frustration that their learners were not working at grade-appropriate levels. For Ghettoh, the lowering of standards was attributed to her own internalised beliefs about learners' ability because, as she noted, *"I was treating them as kids and I was thinking that they've got that knowledge; little bit of knowledge"* (SI). B.V. believed that learners were not really capable of answering challenging questions, indicating that, whilst she does ask cognitively demanding questions *"very few are able to answer them"*, and that learners were very dependent on *"adults rather than being independent"* (SI). This proved confusing for her, because most of the learners were orphans, and *"they should be independent, but looking at the way they do the work, it worries"*. This was echoed by Joel, who indicated that *"most learners have got problems with these higher-order questions. In most times, they are not exposed to that"* (SI).

The understandings from the teachers and evident in the lesson discussed above resemble what Boaler and Staples (2008, p. 612) refer to as '**restricted curricular diets**' that prevent learners from being able to access high quality learning. In such contexts, learners are being taught that they are not capable, which would likely have a negative impact on their future aspirations (Boaler & Staples, 2008). Asking low-level questions and having low expectations of what learners are capable of, results in the continuation of inequity and injustice.

But Ghettoh also attributed blame for the lowering of standards and the low cognitive demand on departmental policy with regard to condonation²⁵, which she believed allowed learners to think they could pass. This, for her, added to the high dropout rate in high school,

²⁵ Condonation is a departmental policy that allows the Superintendent of Schools to make decisions about whether learners who have not successfully passed the grade to be condoned to the next grade based on particular requirements like age, number of years in the phase and so on.

and for her, those learners who “*condoned maybe two classes before. How can he get good marks from me?*” (SI). Being restricted by policy prevented her from taking on an agential role, and she questioned whether or not she should or could be able to help learners who have been condoned. However, B.V., Sthe and Ghettoh welcomed the introduction of the CAPS policy, as this prevented the focus on lower-order questioning. Ghettoh ensured that she used ‘*Bloom’s taxonomy*’ when making decisions about the levels of questions to ask learners. Here it would seem as though teachers take comfort and draw strength from a highly regularised curriculum that provides them with the means and the knowledge of how to carry out their professional duties. It becomes a system of checks for Ghettoh, where she can ensure that she is using Bloom’s taxonomy to increase the cognitive levels in her classroom.

7.4.3 Quality of Instructional Time: “*They want to just produce what you’ve told them*”

In this section, I show how teachers use their instructional time according to what they believe best suits their learners’ needs. Embedded in these understandings were the teachers’ views that they needed to be responsive to learner demands if positive learning outcomes were to be met. However, being responsive revealed the complexities and contradictions teachers were facing. They had to meet the demands of learners, but at the same time, the demands of the curriculum and the educational systems were a reality for teachers that they found difficult to manage. Teachers’ responses, again, were not only pragmatic to their context, but also to themselves and their knowledge. The large classrooms that are an endemic feature of poor schools made it difficult to teach and sometimes prevented teachers from responding to the individual needs of learners. This was compounded by the fact that teachers felt that they did not have the necessary skills to teach learners with learning disabilities, but also the reluctance on the part of the learners to engage in critical thinking and application of knowledge because learners “*They don’t want to do that. They want to just produce what you’ve told them*” (Ghettoh SI).

Teachers tried to circumvent this by involving their learners in the co-construction of knowledge, or through constant engagement with a practice, in order for them to “*getting [get] used [to that]*, because Ghettoh, for example, wanted to “*upgrade that skill*” (SI). Evange found that providing learners with opportunities to learn from each other, either in pairs, or in groups, was an effective practice, and he related this to his experiences as a learner, where he preferred to have his “*friend explain mathematics... Rather than the teacher*” (SI). This was because he felt that he could not tell his teacher he did not understand

for fear of “*disappoint(ing) the teacher*” (SI). For him, encouraging learners to learn from each other had a two-fold advantage, where learners were learning from each other, and learned different “*ways of doing the sum.*”

In this section, I use Bernstein’s (1981) concept of **framing** to understand how teachers use the pacing of knowledge to help them acquire the necessary outcome. I found that I needed to also use conceptual knowledge from various disciplines to understand the complexity of teachers’ practices that the concept of framing did not allow for. Bernstein indicates that there is a difference between **internal and external framing** (Hoadley, 2003). Internal and external framing were impacted upon by different conditions and produced different results. For Bernstein (1981), **external framing** is about the influence that external agents and agencies (like policy, the Department of Education, as well as management) have on what is possible in the classroom (Hoadley, 2003). This involves the ability of teachers to negotiate their profession in ways where they feel they have a voice and can exercise agency. **Internal framing** is essentially about the pedagogical choices that teachers make about how to get learners to understand the knowledge that is being taught and prescribed by policy (Hoadley, 2003). Based on lesson observation, pacing within the lessons themselves was a combination of both weak and strong framing. Teachers took up two potentially differing positions, the need to pace work according to learner needs, given learners’ ability, motivation and interest, and the difficulty of negotiating this, as well as external conditions of curriculum expectations and accountability demands of the syllabus, and the Department of Education. This was an intricate and complex “*balancing act*” (Zippo, SI).

7.4.4 External regulation of the syllabus and teachers’ practices: “*I need to catch up*”

All the teachers were concerned with the completion of the syllabus, indicating that it was difficult, given the needs of learners. The accountability demands based on the syllabus were ones that presented confusion and uncertainty for teachers. Teachers had to contend with many conflicting and troublesome demands, viz. **external and internal accountability** demands, the uncertainty around constant curriculum change, and their own internalised embodied understanding that what occurred at ex-Model C schools was the benchmark to measure their own ability. In trying to meet curriculum requirements, the CAPS curriculum became a resource that teachers used to enable them to enact their practice with confidence, as expectations were clearly outlined by the curriculum. B.V. for example, had previously expressed the lack of direction in the NCS curriculum, but with CAPS “*liked that there is*

direction. You know what you are supposed to teach and they even provide us with the content [...] but you know we are directed [...] you are not confused or lost what to teach. It is direction, and then also, I like the follow up that they do, the assessment” (SI). CAPS gave B.V. and Sthe, for example, a sense of security, and its explicit guidelines allowed them to measure their own performance to ensure that they were on the right track. But this was also a form of **external accountability and showed strong framing**. B.V. liked this manner of rigidity and the prescriptive nature of the curriculum, and this must be seen against the backdrop of constant curriculum change, and the resultant disequilibrium. There is an urgent need by teachers to find meaning and establish a sense of control over their work.

B.V.: *The programme has got the dates, when we plan we make sure that we plan the date, the week. Now, when check, now you compare the date planned, and the date of completion, you notice that I’m being behind then you have to cover. The dates that I use are guiding us, and our principal used to say the planning and the work in the exercise book should tally, so that you know you are still on the right track* (SI).

Sthe: *As you have seen here, we have got these, which tells us that this is one hour or nine hours. I know when my nine hours are beginning I will time myself. So if I exceed that then, eish, I need to catch up* (SI).

Here, the dimension of pacing is set by the **rate of transmission** (Hoadley, 2003), and whilst teachers found this kind of prescriptive curriculum comforting, failing to follow the curriculum in relation to pacing and selection resulted in teachers feeling pressured. Teachers concerns with the hours and timing themselves means that they are under constant pressure to complete the syllabus, having to ensure that the “*exercise books tally*” (B.V.) with the curriculum document. This was compounded by the fact that they had to show their attempts to “*catch up*” and “*do their level best to go according to the policy*” (Ghettoh, SI), and to provide explanations to the Department of Education, members of management and other teachers as to why the syllabus was not completed. With regards to covering the syllabus, the teachers commented:

Sthe: *Now our officials are saying it is good and it is bad. It is good if the learners are achieving what they are supposed to. It is bad if it is the teacher who is ahead and maintained the speed, whereas the learners are far behind. So it is very, very difficult*

to strike the balance. Although there are some aspects where you can strike the balance. [...] I will be able to cover this at the given time [...] when I submitted my half yearly examination paper to the principal, I told him that I have not covered this aspect, but I will put it down on the question paper [...] you have to come up with a plan of how you are going to cover that, because he has to cover himself and to cover the educator (SI).

Joel: *You know there is a form that we fill in, which goes to the department where educator X will actual(ly) say I was doing this and I didn't cover this [...] why we have not covered it. [...] . So that come the following year, the ones that have passed know exactly where to start off, what areas is here to spend more time on, or to start on before the proceeding of whatever lesson. That is not what we normally do; somehow we feel it helps us (SI).*

B.V.: *It happen that I've not covered the topic, I will inform the teacher the next teacher that unfortunately, because of this and that I did not do this, can you help me when you do your recap. Can you please cover this for me (SI).*

The teachers' practices described above are characterised by strongly internalised forms of control that are externally imposed. Here, teachers find it difficult to position themselves and negotiate the context of having to comply with external forms of control of the syllabus that has strong pacing criteria. Teachers try to find ways to be motivated and continue to work hard, and they see this form of accountability as one that can position the learners as central to their work. At the heart of teachers' understanding is that learners are struggling and that they are required to help them. Teachers are also made to be accountable to learners and their co-workers. This kind of teacher collaboration and accountability is based on the need to help learners and inform pedagogical decisions (Hoadley, 2003). The **pacing** of curricular content is made known to the principal and the teachers. Whilst there is strong regulation of the pacing by the principal, where content coverage must correspond, there is also the understanding that there is shared responsibility by teachers for content coverage.

But this also presents a dilemma to teachers, because whilst slow pacing in working-class classrooms is a feature of South African schools (Hoadley, 2012), the teachers above try to negotiate the syllabus in such a way that learners' needs are taken into account. Sthe, for

example, recognises that in the pressure to complete the syllabus, sometimes learners are left behind, which for him is unacceptable. Studies by researchers like Hoadley (2003), Reeves and Muller (2005) and Shalem and Hoadley (2009) conclude that slow **pacing** not only impedes syllabus coverage, but the ineffective use of instructional time fails to provide learners with the required curriculum knowledge needed for success in schools. These researchers also indicate however, that teachers must be aware of the needs of learners and work accordingly. To ensure that learners are not disadvantaged by this, B.V., Joel and Sthe inform their colleagues as well as members of the Department of Education that certain aspects could not be taught. But institutional demands also ensure that teachers “*come up with a plan of how you are going to cover*” (Sthe, SI).

7.5 Positive Ways to Ensure Learners’ Access to Quality Education

This section provides an awareness of some teachers’ attempts to challenge and transform the learning experiences of their learners. I detail how, in particular, Evange and Sthe resist the current societal and institutional discourses that surround what learners in marginalised contexts are able to do. These teachers make attempts, through various teaching strategies and pedagogical decisions, to ensure that their classroom is characterised by high intellectual demand, rigorous teaching and purposeful participation.

7.5.1. Acting our survivance: “*It is better to walk with the learners than rather walk with the syllabus*”

As previously indicated, learners were at the core of teachers’ practices and this also meant making pedagogical decisions about content, sequencing or scaffolding, as well as how instructional time was structured. It was within the classroom that teachers found that the external forms of control suddenly impacted on their pedagogical decision-making and their practice resembled that of **survivance**. This is a term developed by Vizenor (2008) to understand the lives of Native Americans in North America. Survivance implies two concepts together, namely the respective acts of resistance and survival. I use this in the same manner that Joseph (2013) does to mean that despite conditions that exist that make them ‘victims’ of a system, teachers continued to find ways to envision hope. Here, teachers who themselves had grown up in marginalised communities, have acquired forms of agency that they use to empower learners in the community. This was their attempt to find ways to support and build the confidence of learners.

Teachers expressed concern and frustration in negotiating the context of accountability, while having to still be responsive to the academic needs of learners. For B.V., social problems that learners experience have a direct impact on what she is able to achieve during the course of the day, and often resulted in *“we move slowly, because some learners do not even have tables to do their homework”* (SI). Zippo, understanding the differing intellectual needs of learners, noted: *“some are so slow, even though you say you can take this and complete it at home as your homework, you’ll find that he or she comes back without having done it, despite ‘pushing’ them”* (SI). This called for them to be adaptable, and to negotiate learners’ needs with the accountability demands to complete the syllabus. Zippo made constant comparisons with the quantity of work covered in ex-Model C schools, and commented, *“it worries me a lot, because this is how I see that the speed, it really counts”*. Teachers were, however, steadfast in their belief that the only way to ensure that learners have access to quality learning was to have a clear understanding of what learners know. Their strategy to provide learners with opportunities was to challenge and be agential in their practice. This meant that *“you have got to start from where they have not performed well. It is no use to go on if they have not understood the lesson or the previous lesson”* (Ngubs, SI).

Sthe, for example, had an understanding of procedural knowledge that was needed in order to build the conceptual knowledge of learners. For him, *“it would be difficult to teach percentages if they don’t understand multiplication. You will go back and do the multiplication and do it first and then you go back to the percentage. This is where you need to start. That is why, whenever you do a new topic, you have to do a diagnostic assessment to ascertain where your learners are”* (SI). Whist he acknowledges that concepts would not be covered, the pace of the learners determined progression through the syllabus. He would prefer to teach concepts thoroughly and to be happy *“that all the other aspects that I have covered I was thoroughly done”* (SI).

Teachers negotiated the factors that prevented them from completing the syllabus, but built up the capacity and ability of learners. This meant, for example, spending less time on aspects that learners grasp quickly, such as decimals. Sthe was confident that learners had grasped data handling and decimals and aspects within these topics, such as place value, but fractions were a *“monster”* to learners. Learners, he recognised, lacked confidence in this area and were *“scared of fractions”*. He thus spent, *“I don’t know how many hours but I have exceeded that because I could see that they were struggling with the fractions”* (SI). Both Sthe and

B.V. were proactive, and used whatever opportunity that arose in the school to work with learners to ensure that they were not disadvantaged. They used the time of teachers who were absent or who had taken leave for a long period and devised a catch-up programme to “*close the gaps that are existing*” (B.V., SI). But even working out a catch-up programme needed careful thought and planning. In order to be fair and just to learners, the catch up plan did not “*mean that you push down things, down the throats of the learners, they have to learn it, work it out*” (Sthe, SI). Evange and Ghettoh used the homework period or the morning period. Joel and B.V. used the CAPS document in agential ways, often using the revision time prescribed in the document to cover specific aspects. These were important ways in which teachers made the attempt to ensure that learners were not disadvantaged, because it was also about their own personal sense of responsibility to learners. As B.V. noted: “*it’s a bad thing because this value of accountability and honesty it won’t be there but what can I do*” (SI). These were all forms of resistance and survival in changing the lives of marginalised learners whom they teach, and to navigate the **pedagogy of poverty** (Haberman, 1991).

Evange refused to allow his practice to be determined by syllabus constraints. For him, it was imperative that learners grasp the knowledge that is required. As an **act of resistance and survival or suvivance**, he indicates that he is accountable to himself and his learners, and thus, he “*sets my own standards and would assess myself*”. This did not mean that syllabus imperatives were not important, rather, he placed learners’ learning at the centre of his pedagogical decision-making because of his experience and in-depth understanding of learners’ ability, having the view that “*it is better to walk with the learners than rather walk with the syllabus*” (SI). His personal sense of accountability was his act of survival, for, failing to meet the needs of learners would ultimately impact on his internal sense-of-self and his need to be “*proud of myself*”.

For him, meeting the needs of learners and raising the achievement level to meet curriculum expectations was vital. Curriculum coverage was important in this regard, but did not constitute a checklist. For Evange, merely covering the curriculum with little regard for learners was not respectful to learners and to his own teaching ability. This would also not enable him to work in socially just ways. He was confident that management and parents would understand his perspective, because for him, he is working for learners’ interests and needs. His sense of personal accountability and responsibility to learning and learners

informed his decisions with regards to time, content and learner needs, ensuring, for example, when taking care of learners experiencing difficulty, he noted that *“to those who have grasped it you need to give them something else”* (SI). This was also true of B.V., who would provide learners with *“extra work and even an extension exercise for these who are fast”* (SI).

Classroom observation through videotaped lessons and field notes reveals that teachers' practices had gradations of weak and strong framing over selection, sequencing, evaluation and pacing of knowledge. Evange's lesson presented below is representative of a teacher who structures the internal framing of the lesson in ways that show his autonomy and his desire to meet the needs of learners (Bernstein, 1996; Hoadley, 2003). I do not present the entire lesson, rather I use excerpts that forward the argument that I wish to make. The lesson follows the same structure, with the learners going to the board, explaining their answers, the teacher interjecting asking for clarity or justification, the learners and teacher evaluating the work done by the learner at the board. Thus, there is a combination of weak framing for selection, sequencing, pacing and evaluation as these are jointly constructed. There was always a sense of urgency about his lessons, and he set a frenetic space in the classroom. He was engaged in his lessons from the time he stepped into the classroom until the buzzer went signalling the next lesson. He never sat down, other than to sit next to a learner to explain and clarify concepts. He walked around, constantly checking on learners and providing the necessary support. One would often hear imperatives where he issued learners with instructions to work quickly, giving them time-constraints to work within. This was in keeping with how he thought about mathematics as a subject that was interesting, exciting and challenging, and one that required effort. For him, setting a demanding pace functioned as a motivational tool to encourage learners to *“make an effort and sit[ting] on them eventually they become one of the quicker groups that will achieve knowledge as quickly”* (SI).

Ngubs, Sthe and B.V. cited the need to empower learners through fast pacing in order to prepare them for the writing of an examination, tertiary institutions and the world of work which was governed by time. Evange was also very aware of the needs of some learners for additional support and would at times slow the pacing of the lesson, until he was sure that the learner had fully grasped the concept. In this lesson (10/10/2012), he slows the pacing of the lesson to ensure that Mkhize (a learner) has understood his mistake. Thus, pacing can be

characterised by both weak and strong frames. Weakly framed pacing is connected to the degree of control that learners have over their learning. What this also does is create the space for learners to have a sense of agency over their own work. What is also highlighted is the complexity involved in Evange's practice, where he makes an attempt to provide the necessary support for learners, to increase participation, as well as access to official knowledge.

T: So, here I am going to do number one with you, and then you are going to do the rest – you will come to the board to do it. I am going to go through *these quickly because we have a lot to cover*.

T: Next one? Who is going to do the next one? Mkhize (learners laugh) you are doing number 6. Quickly Dlamini you are doing no. 7. Quickly! Bongumusa quickly! One minute boys, one minute: lots to cover.

T: You should be finished with your corrections. I am erasing number 1 and 2 from the board.

T: Simpiwe: Do this on the board for us on the board – *quickly!*

T: You are watching the board everybody, and you are going to explain to us what you are doing. You have one minute.

T: Can you explain what you mean when you say $2 = y$.

T: You are watching the board while you are doing this, and you are marking your work.
[Teacher walking around and checking that learners are doing the work marking and doing corrections as well whilst learners are doing the sum on the board. Later in the lesson he calls Mkhize to explain a problem]

T: Explain Mkhize.

Mkhize: I just put down 1 as it is and I said $17b + 17$.

T: Why is it wrong? Explain. Tell me why it is wrong. Explain to me very, very clearly. Yes [teacher walks to another boy and says], yes you, had your hand up.

L: He is wrong because that bracket stands for multiply, not add.

T: Very good – what else will make it wrong? *Come again explain slowly*.

L: there are variables and constants – you cannot add those.
[Teacher then gets Mkhize to work through the sum with his and the rest of the learners guidance].

T: You are thinking of another method. You are not talking. [Teacher says this to all learners to ensure complete concentration on the lesson. The lesson continues in the same manner with learners going to the board to explain their understanding of the sums]

7.5.2 Individualising learning by paying attention to individual learners: *“I concentrate to those needy learners”*

Throughout my six weeks of observation at each school, I noticed that classes were large, and providing opportunities for individual attention was difficult. Classroom teaching involved whole-class teaching. Whilst, for example, all the teachers did whole-class teaching, only some teachers made attempts to individualise the needs of the learners. B.V. would often teach the entire class the lesson, and then work with learners *“who are slow”*. Field notes revealed this occurred on a regular basis, but especially when she did guided-writing activities where, *“I had to take a table of about eight of them then I sit down with them, I guide them”* (SI). Despite her efforts to provide learners with opportunities to develop their understanding and be at grade-appropriate level, she acknowledged that there were still learners ‘left behind.’ Ghettoh found that learners could be disruptive if they were bored and this required that she differentiates activities and then *“I concentrate to those needy learners. I deal with them in isolation”* (SI). Teachers here modify their practice and provide **differentiated support** (Caswell, 2011), because of the perceived needs of learners.

The mathematics teachers made use of board work to determine and evaluate learners’ thinking and knowledge acquisition. Learners were called to the front of the class and asked to explain their understanding. This was to aid personal sense-making, and learners were required to respond individually, either to the teacher whilst they worked in groups, or to the entire class. Calling learners to the front of the class was a form of **isolating** or **individualising** (Caswell, 2011). This goal of personal sense-making was achieved through isolating individual students that gave teachers a chance to listen to learners, but also to provide the necessary support. Their approach to fostering learning was to attempt to scaffold learners’ own thinking. Here, the respect for student thinking and their learning provided students with the confidence they needed to persist. The following is an example of how Sthe provided individual students with an opportunity to construct knowledge through logical reasoning and scaffolding of knowledge. Learners were thus able to construct their knowledge through carefully questioning and reasoning. In this example (22/10/2012), Sthe has learners working in pairs, and he then walked around providing additional individual support to learners who were struggling. He then called a learner to the board to demonstrate his thinking.

T: Take our pieces of paper and work out 20% of R300. Work in pairs so that we can be quick. What are we supposed to say? [pointing to learner to respond]

Learner: [comes to the board] and writes $20/100 \times 300/1$.
 $= 20 \times 3$
 $= 60$

T: What is the product of 20 and 3?

L: 60, sir.

T: So how do work out sale price?

L: R300 minus R60 = (learner is required to work out the sums using hundreds, tens and units)

T: Make sure you put it in the correct order. Tens under tens, units under units.

L: [writes]: R300
- 60

240 [learner does the crossing out and borrowing]

Teacher then goes on to make the link between percentages and fractions. And asks another learners to write 50% as a fraction which the learner does 50/100.

T: Now simplify it.

[Learner cannot do so]

T: Fifty percent means what out of a hundred?

L: Half [learner starts to write, and simplifies 50/100]. 50 goes into hundred one time, and 50 goes into hundred two times; so it is a half, sir.

[Teacher uncertain of learners understanding and so provides them with another example to work out in pairs and groups. Learners are required to work out the following equation:

25% of R450-00.

Teacher indicates to learners that they need to show their working out, especially the use of multiplication. He gives them time, although it is not stipulated, but continuously hurries them. Time does run out, at which point the teacher says, "Let's do it together". The teacher writes as the learner chosen calls out what the teacher is required to do.

45 x 25

Together the teacher and the learners worked out long multiplication to get an answer of 1125, which is then taken and simplified.

$25/100 \times 450/1 = 1125/10 = R112, 50$.

[Teacher indicates that he is pleased and learners all clap].

The teacher requires whole class attention, even whilst he signals that one learner at a time must respond to his questions. Learners are given the time and space to think through and work out the sum on their own. **Procedural rules** are adhered to when he indicates that learners must collate tens under tens, and units under units. What individualising attention does, in this case, is enable the teacher to respond to learners on an individual basis, and ensures that learners are all focused on what is occurring at the board. He then proceeds to ask the learners questions that will extend their understanding in order for them to gain deep conceptual knowledge of mathematical processes. The sequencing in the above excerpt is strongly framed. He checks that learners have an understanding of concepts like *product*, by asking what the product of 20 and 3 might be. He continues to provide learners with scaffolded understanding of how to work out the percentage through asking: “*what is the sale price then?*” Sthe works towards his mental image of an ideal learner, which for him was one that worked accurately, and he emphasises this in the teaching. He extends learners’ knowledge by making connections with fractions and again provides the necessary scaffolding to the learner to facilitate understanding. He provides more learning opportunities, by getting learners to practise in pairs. This allowed learners to have a sense of agency over their work as they constructed knowledge and understanding with their peers.

His strategy to support individual learner’s needs was to provide them with the opportunity to think and reason out aloud. Students were required to think quickly, but there was support to give learners time and space to understand where the confusions lay. Thus, in this case, **instructional time** is shaped by learners’ input, and students learn individually and in pairs or groups. Here, **pacing** was weakened to meet the needs of learners. The **selection** and **sequencing** in the excerpt above can be coded as strongly framed. Sthe made the decision about the topic of the lesson (in this case, it was on percentages) as well as the manner in which the lesson will be sequenced and scaffolded. **Scaffolding** is a Vygotskian term that details the manner in which teachers should support the cognitive and emotional development of learners (Athanases & de Oliveira, 2014). Through proper scaffolding by teachers, learners are motivated to engage in learning and develop autonomy and meaning-making. The framing over the pacing is weakened, where the teacher requires whole-class attention, but signals that one learner at a time must respond. In this way, he individualises the work of learners. He also relaxes the **pace of the transmission** in recognising that the learner does not know how to simplify and to enable the learner through scaffolded support to get to the answer. However, pacing is still coded strongly. The **evaluative rules** are explicitly given to

learners, especially evident in learners' responses and teacher questioning. Learners are required to learn **specialised complex mathematical esoteric knowledge** (Bernstein, 2000; Hoadley, 2006), and must display thinking and reasoning on an individual level, as well as a class level, to allow for teacher evaluation.

7.5.3 Making explicit connections and multiple representation

Teachers believed that children learned differently, and therefore, tried various ways in which to present ideas and concepts in order to help learners make **connections** and enable access to learning. The teachers here had clear instructional goals in mind, to ensure learners gained the necessary knowledge in Mathematics, whilst validating learners' existing knowledge and experience. They purposefully selected knowledge from language, geography and science to encourage access to knowledge through various ways of representing mathematical concepts. The lessons' observation-coding revealed that learning subjects were strongly insulated and were **classified as strong C+**. The only time that teachers made reference to other learning areas was mostly by way of explanation of particular concepts relevant for the lesson. Evange, for example, in this excerpt from the lesson observation, used geographical and scientific terms to make connections with the mathematical concept of integers. One of the learners, Simphiwe had indicated that you cannot subtract bigger numbers from smaller numbers. Evange then attempts to show how this is possible. In his explanation of the concept of negative numbers, he made the connection of negative numbers to that of temperature – a geographical/scientific term. He used learners' understanding of temperature and freezing point to connect what they already knew from geography and natural science to the school mathematical concept of integers (Gutstein et al., 1997).

Evange enables **connected knowing** for learners, where the intentional use of one connection of positive numbers realises multiple connections to subtraction, temperature, and integers that aids learners' conceptual development. This was to enable sense-making and logical connections in mathematics. To make the concept even more accessible, he uses a number-line as visual representation to aid comprehension. In so doing, the teacher encapsulates the idea that mathematics is a subject that involves a reasoning process, it is logical, and requires learners to validate their own thinking and answers. He required learners to 'prove' their thinking. By using concepts from natural science and geography, he also reinforces the understanding that mathematics is a subject that is used everywhere. Evange thus engages learners with critical mathematical thinking (Gutstein et al., 1997). He was also able to show

them that different things freeze at different temperature points, and that smaller numbers can be subtracted from bigger numbers.

T: Okay we are going back. We need to prove it, because I don't know [learners laugh]. We are going back to the number line. [Provides explanation of where positive and negative numbers are situated on the number line ensues]. Right, we are saying 4 minus negative 5. We start moving from 4. In which direction are we moving towards – the positive or negative direction?

L [in unison]: Negative.

T: How many times?

L: 5.

T: Okay let's count together. Learners and teacher count. So we stop where:

L: -1.

T: Very good. So, Simphiwe, when you look at positive and negative numbers, can we subtract a bigger number from a smaller number?

L: Yes.

T: If I say to you: 'it is -2 degrees today', what does it mean to you?

L3: Temperatures below freezing point of water?

Teacher: Good, excellent. Temperature below freezing point of water. You must say below freezing point of water. Be specific, because other things don't freeze at 0 degrees. So, also, never say you cannot subtract bigger number from smaller numbers.

Sthe also provided learners with everyday examples to explain the concept of negative numbers. He explained to the learners about using a lift, and noted that lifts sometimes go below the ground level. He drew a picture on the board showing from the ground floor up to the 3rd floor. He used particular language concepts to get learners to visualise this, namely: *"we say it is below ground floor. Other floors are above ground floor. If you go down what happens to the numbers – do they decrease or increase – get smaller or bigger?"* (Field notes: 22/01/2013).

These kinds of **explicit connections** (Ladson-Billings, 1995) were important for Sthe and Evange, and they based this on their experiences of teaching, where they were concerned with being responsive to learners' needs. Both these teachers had clear instructional goals in mind to make knowledge more relevant to learners, and to help learners reason mathematically. Sthe's emphasis on language concepts like 'above' and 'below', 'decrease'

and ‘increase’ are not only English terms, but terms used in mathematics that can determine the extent to which learners understand. He recognised the English language as a barrier. He often intentionally focused on language usage in the classroom, asking learners to spell words or to correct the way in which he used language. Sthe understands that learners do not have the required mathematical literacy skills to enable them to engage constructively with the grade expectations, and attempts to be responsive to their needs. For him, it is not that learners do not have the ability to understand, because *“when you start interpreting or when you explain to them they will say, ‘ooh, ja’ and then you realise, really, it wasn’t mathematics that they have got problems with, it was the language”* (SI). Thus, explicitly making connections with language concepts and other learning areas was a *“strategy I use”* (Sthe, SI).

Not only do these teachers use explicit connections to make learning more meaningful, but also cumulative **learning and knowledge building** (Maton, 2009, 2013) is enabled, where learners are able to transfer the knowledge that they have learned from the everyday, from other learning areas like social science (inter-discursive) as well as having knowledge of previous concepts linked within mathematics itself (intra-discursive). This enables the scaffolding of knowledge, so that learners are able to move from the concrete to the abstract (Freebody, Maton & Martin, 2008; Maton, 2009). Evange’s references to the number-line, to positive and negative numbers, and then, as the lesson progresses, to subtraction of integers, and then variables and constants, show the level of abstract thinking that is required. This **temporal portability** allows the learners then to re-think, re-define and then extend their knowledge-base in relation to the new information presented by their teachers in the process of scaffolding (Freebody, et al., p. 194). Evange’s questions of *“so we stop where?”* and *“when you look at positive and negative numbers can you subtract a bigger number from a smaller number”* also provide learners with clear accountability markers. These accountability markers are an attempt to foster independent thinking and joint accountability of the learning process.

7.5.4 Pedagogy of compassionate rationality: *“Teaching taught to me at university was so much based on process”*

Slamat (2009) indicates that the pedagogy of **compassionate rationality** is contingent on teachers who believe that they are intellectuals capable of critical rationality. For such individuals, teaching and learning is promoted as an intellectual activity. An intellectual activity, he surmises, is predicated on ideas, questions, arguments and critique. An intellectual activity engages with ideas, questions, arguments and critique. I present Evange’s

story because for me, he was an enigma. He, I believed, exemplified transformational resistance and survivance (Vizenor, 2008; Joseph, 2013). I present his story below, firstly by attempting to explain his initial discontent, and the manner in which he negotiated his practice in keeping with his own personal and professional dispositions. His classroom and his teaching are presented as one of possibility and hope. I do not forward his practice as one that should be heralded as exemplary of best practices. However, I see his practice as one that embodies pedagogy of hope and is indicative of a teacher's work ethic to succeed despite contextual constraints.

Evange views mathematics in a different manner to the way in which his colleagues do, and his views are representative of a teacher struggling to find a niche, and to hold onto his beliefs of the efficacy of mathematics, and how it should be taught. He was a young teacher who had university education and training, which presented him with an internal struggle to overcome. For him, mathematics teaching and learning that he was taught at university was *"...so much based on process much more than just the final thing- the fact"* (FI). This was contrary to what learners whom he was teaching had been taught. For him, learners were learning mathematics in isolation, where the focus was only on the end-product, and resulted in them having very little critical understanding of mathematics as a process. This **institutional disadvantage** that learners had grown accustomed to, made it difficult for him to teach in a manner that he felt gave justice to learners, as well as to the subject itself.

His understanding is in keeping with research by Cobb, Wood, Yackel and McNeal (1992) and Gutiérrez (2002), who found that traditions surrounding the way in which learning areas are taught influence new teachers' ability to practise and teach mathematics in a manner that they have been trained to do. Evange struggled with this, noting: *"what I have noticed that some of this learners their background in maths has been so much based on fact"*. Here Evange is aware of the institutional disadvantage that learners are subjected to, which impacts negatively on learners' ability to access a powerful knowledge structure. Whilst he was passionate about teaching mathematics as a process and not a goal, he found it difficult and frustrating teaching it at the time of the first interview. He felt so far removed from how he knew and understood mathematics to be taught and learned, that he could not access the **moral rewards** for teaching mathematics (Santoro, 2011). He questioned the purpose of what he was doing, and then understood the manner in which he was being made to teach mathematics as, *"maths is one of the subjects where you don't get so much of discovery"*. He

compared his teaching of mathematics to that of natural science, and found the investigative and exploratory work associated with science more enjoyable:

you know, it is unlike for instance I used to teach natural science when I first came here. And there we would do things with the learners. Take a trip, walk to the river and they would ask questions and they interact but with maths it is more of fact not really fact but it is just like that. If it is not negative one then you can't have another answer, But you know other learning areas people are able to support their statement and all that so maths is more (punches table to indicate it is just that and no more (FI).

This was an internal struggle for Evange, because he understood the importance of mathematics for the lives of the learners. He was not certain of how to act for social change, despite the fact that he understood the importance of this in challenging institutional and structural inequality. He knew that learning mathematics was vital, and that exposing learners to strong and firm conceptual foundations would enable learners to be able to access the subject that would be significant for their future careers.

He was a teacher who believed that learners themselves were intellectuals and struggled to “intellectualise teaching and learning”, given the context that prevented this (Slamat, 2009, p. 1156). He wanted to teach differently, not in “routinised, unimaginative ways” (Slamat, 2009, p.1156) that reinforced the learning of mathematics as a “*monster*.” Mathematics, for him, was not the formulaistic, procedural traditional mathematics, but one that was an intellectual endeavour. This internal struggle was heightened, because of his own personal identity as a minister, and his role of stewardship. This kind of knowledge of himself and of the learners prepared him to teach in particular ways: “*I want to see that the very little opportunity that I have I make an impact that would help them, not only to sustain them but to go a long way... To interact with other people who would come after generation. They are able to give their best*” (FI). For Evange, whilst he was not happy in terms of “*personal growth and personal interest*”, knew and understood the importance of why he was a teacher in the school. Thus, he understood that he needed to prepare learners for the future. He undertook learning and teaching mathematics with the aim of expanding the future possibilities of learners from marginalised communities (Ladson- Billings, 1995; Gutstein, 2003, 2007a, 2007b) and used it as a tool for social justice and equity. In using his own personal historical trajectory as well

as that of learners, he imagined a future for his learners that enabled him to negotiate his present practice. At this time, mathematics became fascinating and creative for him once more:

find it fascinating. I find that maths is not just formulae. I don't know. Maths, you can do a whole lot with maths. There are amazing truths that one can discover for him or him. So, I find maths interesting. I find it fascinating. I like it when the learners get excited about certain theories and there is light and everyone is just happy rather than you know where you have to just follow the routines. This is a leaf, it is green, and okay and that's it. But for maths there are so many fascinating things (SI).

He and Sthe view mathematics learning and teaching as that which can be learned and mastered very much like a game. In forwarding a pedagogy of **compassionate rationality** (Slamat, 2009), he challenged the learners to think differently, to justify their arguments, and to claim authority and agency within the confines of a classroom environment, based on critical rationality, caring, and deliberate thinking and reasoning about mathematics.

The lesson below is a continuation from the previous day's work (12/10/2012). The teacher writes sums on the board. He gets learners to go up to the board to explain the sums, and how they got the answers.

[Writes the following on the board]:

1. $y = m^2 + 3$; $x = 3$.

Teacher: What do we call the 3? What is the name of 3? It has a special name? (Teacher walks around and checks learners' books).

Learners: Constant.

T: Good! Right, constant. When you say constant, what does that mean? When is something that is constant? Can you give me an example of something that is constant? Any example?

[Learners are quiet – then hands are raised]

Learner 1: A number that does not change.

T: Speak louder.

[Learner repeats and all clap for him]

T: Right, the value of that number does not change. Whether you multiply it with a thousand or a million the value of that number does not change. Remember, when I introduced this I made an example of a car. The modern cars they have a button now called the cruise button.

If you are travelling at 100km per hour, you set the speed change the gears and reach the maximum speed that you want to travel at then you just push the button. Your car will continue at that speed, without any acceleration or deceleration – it will continue at that speed. So you are travelling at a constant speed. In science, when you get to high school, especially when you get to Grade 11, you... you will calculating the speed at which car is travelling. You will be calculating acceleration and deceleration. These are sums that you will be calculating, so it gets more and more interesting. You will learn more about constant. You can walk at constant speed. But it is not easy to walk at a constant speed. And this m – what is it?

L1: A variable.

T: What is a variable? What do we understand by a variable?

L1: Variable means that it will change.

T: Can you hear him?

L2: Variable it change(s). It can be any number.

T: Yes, good. It changes.

The discussion then went on to “like” and “unlike” terms and how to recognise them; which signs separate them and why. The teacher indicates to them to remember a variable as a constant and a term.

I coded the selection and sequencing of the above lesson as strongly framed. This is because Evange himself believed that “*I am the one who knows and has planned what knowledge must be acquired,*” going on to say “*they would not know what is the things they need to know – that is the syllabus, you see*” (SI). The decision about what to teach is therefore guided by the curriculum policy or syllabus, and was his way of ensuring that he provides learners with the necessary knowledge required by schooling. In terms of classification of knowledge, there is strong classification of the subject mathematics. From the beginning of the lesson, the teacher makes reference to the mathematical concepts and the manner in which they should be used, and notes its special character with the expression: “*it has a special name*” (SI).

He also points to mathematics as being powerfully structured, because it will be learned in high school in natural science. Whilst Bernstein (2000) would indicate that the reference to Science would blur the boundaries of the subject, for Evange, this only reinforces the

understanding that mathematics is everywhere and essential to understanding the world around us. A particular kind of mathematical identity is being forwarded, one that is characterised by the teacher as special and powerful. The instructional decisions that he makes with regards to selection and sequencing of knowledge is underpinned by his understanding of what is important for learners to acquire. The example he uses to enable this acquisition provides learners with access to socially valued forms of knowledge and skills. His use of everyday knowledge and knowledge from other learning areas is an attempt to make the academic content knowledge accessible to learning and meaningful to learners.

Dooley, Exley and Singh (2000) have indicated that providing learners with socially valued knowledge determines a learner's self-worth and identification as someone capable of engaging meaningfully with the curriculum. This recontextualisation of knowledge enables learners to access an otherwise difficult concept. By relating it to understandings from learners' everyday world, he has allowed learners a way into the 'unthinkable'. This inclusion of learners into a specialised language of mathematics ensures learners' **participation**. Singh indicates that "**enhancement** occurs when social, intellectual or personal boundaries are experienced not as confining," but as acquiring powerful knowledge (Singh, 1997, p.8).

Evange is successful in taking dis-embedded vertical discourse and incorporating it into the lives of learners to build and develop learners' conceptual knowledge, whilst still ensuring that learners acquire the necessary knowledge required for tests and examinations. Evange is able to circumvent the conundrum with which teachers are routinely faced, where in making learning more relevant, intellectual rigour can be sacrificed (William & Wilson, 2010). This intricate negotiation by Evange is an attempt to provide meaningful learning for learners.

Intellectual rigour is vital to the process of learning, and these are his expectations of himself and his learners in pushing them to engage in intellectually challenging and demanding work. Intellectual rigour is demonstrated by his insistence on, for example, accuracy, but also in the kinds of relationships that learners are required to develop with mathematics. This need for accuracy was established throughout his lessons. He would say "*wait*", "*warning!*" "*be careful!*" and "*how many had all correct?*" Or, correcting learners' inaccurate calculations. (Field notes: 12/10/2012). In the following excerpt, Evange focuses on ensuring learners work accurately. In this extract, taken from another Grade Seven class on the same topic of

integers, Evange recognised that learners did not have a clear understanding of mathematical terms.

T: Say, for example, that m is -1 and x is $+1$. So -1 plus $+1$ is equal to?

L1: Zero, sir.

Teacher then draws a number line and gets learners to engage and learners still get to zero.

T: It is not very accurate. It is not possible to calculate variables, they have a special name. Teacher points to m and x . (meaning what is this?)

L1: A variable.

L2: A term.

T: No, is it not a variable (to L1). Yes, (to L2) it is a term because terms are separated ...

L1: By positive or negative signs.

T: Terms are not separated by division or multiple ... Remember a variable, a constant and a term. I don't expect any of you to get answers wrong. If I give you an algebraic equation and ask how many terms there are? Terms are separated by...?

L1: A plus and minus only.

T: I can give you 16 variables, multiple together here, as long as there is not addition and subtraction it will just be one term.

Evange's insistence on learners acquiring an accurate understanding of terms and concepts enables learners to make the necessary connections and to self-correct. This kind of scaffolding and sequencing of knowledge allows learners to build up their knowledge base and to see the connectivity of mathematical concepts in order to acquire the deep knowledge required. Learners are taught procedural and conceptual knowledge in order to develop proficiency in the subject. Evange thought that mathematics was a subject that enabled discovery, and in the above lesson, he allows learners to make the discovery on their own, through the use of the number-line as a mathematical tool, and through guided questioning, to come to the understanding of what are variables and terms. He constructed mathematics itself as a subject that can be broken down and cut into small pieces. Thus, in his lessons, he constantly challenged learners to explain, think carefully, go back and revisit to make the necessary connections to mathematics as logical and not routines. He regularly spoke to learners, saying: *"you are on the right track but you need to explain more."*

7.5.5 Claiming authority and agency: “*Explain what you are doing*”

Throughout Evange’s lessons, there were requirements from the teacher. He would often say, “can you explain what you mean when you say?”; “what is the next step?”; “explain yourself”; “somebody assist him”; and “there is another method - somebody tell me the other method?”

In this lessons teacher writes on the board:

$3(2 + 4)$
 $= 6 + 12.$
 $= 18.$

T: $3(2 = 4)$. What do you notice here? Do we have any variables?

T: Somebody tell me the other method?

L1: You put down 3 and multiply 3 (learner is struggling).

T: Do you want to help her?

Learner 2: Yes.

[Later in the lesson]

T: Thobi, right – finished? Explain what you are doing.

T: I saw hands go up... yes?

L2: She is wrong because you are multiplying...

T: But wait a minute, $3 + 3 = 6$.

L: But she must say 3×3 to get the correct answer.

T: Why can’t she say $3 + 3$?

L: They are variables.

T: Yes, they are variables, but what kind of variables?

L: Unlike variables.

Across the three lessons there are constant urgent imperatives used, such as “*watch this, any comments?*” and “*which one of you says this is correct?*” Learners involvement is evident and they would often say or ask “*but sir, it is wrong*”; or “*I’m confused too*”. They would ask the teacher and the rest of the learners “*isn’t there a difference between ...*”

I observed the way in which learners come to know mathematics, to understand how learners apply themselves to tasks and to construct mathematical knowledge. In getting learners to understand, justify and explain their understanding, learners not only come to know more

about mathematics, but also about how they are constructed as mathematics learners. Learners are required to provide informed, deliberate, and reasoned understanding of the information that they have received, both to the teacher and their peers. Evange's question as to why can't she say ' $3 + 3$ ' requires that learners engage and reflect before answering. Learners' utterances in this and other lessons observed, of "*but, Sir it is wrong*" or "*I'm confused*" and "*isn't there a difference*" show the kind of reflection with which learners are engaging.

Cobb et al. (1992) refer to this way of working as **situations for validation**, where learners are required to justify what they have made explicit to the class. Learners' incorrect answers are not presented as knowledge failures, but rather as opportunities to learn. Learners are provided with the space, time and opportunity to develop a critical and deep conceptual understanding of mathematics as a process. Critical thinking as a personal thought process must be taught to learners and this was the characteristic that he felt was missing in the manner in which mathematics was taught in the school. Despite the fact that it was an arduous process that took time, he ensured that he taught this to learners. The quality of the instruction or interaction between Evange and the learners allows a space for learners to see and understand themselves as proficient, capable and knowledgeable. In this classroom, learners are given voice and a sense of agency over their own learning. Here, Evange frames his teaching as one that is constantly in motion and in the process of learning and becoming. By directing and re-directing questions posed by learners, he attempts to show learners that they have control and agency over the learning process, and that their voices are important to him and the process.

In the classroom environment brought about by Evange and his learners' where they **co-construct** knowledge, the learners take ownership of the learning process, and build **social and mathematical identities** that are affirming. Boaler (2002) indicates that the process of mathematics teaching and learning is also a process of identity formation. In this classroom, identities are formed through interactions with the teacher, with each other and with content. Activities planned by Evange provide both independent work as well as collaboration, based on Evange's in-depth knowledge of his learners. In his pursuit of culturally relevant pedagogy, presenting learners with the opportunity to see mathematics as engaging and one that involves critical decision-making was imperative (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Evange stated:

For me, I believe that, ahem, mathematics, aah, learners already know something now about mathematics, so I find that it is good for me to allow them to use the little... that they know and expand on it. [...] It is very rare that they forget the things that they have discovered themselves, rather than me telling them always (SI).

He brought learners to the board to engage learners in the process of independent thinking and co-constructing knowledge with their peers. By withdrawing from his position as teacher-as-authority and knowledge-provider he allows this co-construction process to unfold. Learners have locus of authority, agency and voice. He asks questions to push learners towards a richer, deeper and more mathematical understanding and the appropriate use of mathematical language. The knowledge that he provides learners with enables them to move onto more abstract understandings of the concept. Getting learners to evaluate the work of their peers, to question their thinking, to ask for clarity, and to offer explanations themselves, generated shared and owned knowledge - and the locus of control moves to the learners at times. Being supportive of peers' contribution and respecting ideas were important in the classroom. In this manner, learners come to recognise themselves as legitimate, powerful and competent. In taking care of both their emotional and intellectual needs, Evange ensures that the learners are learning for the future where they see themselves as legitimate users and producers of knowledge. Learners are allowed to author their own identity and personal sense-making in viewing themselves as competent in the mathematics classroom.

7.6. Concluding Remarks

This chapter presented a snapshot of teachers' pedagogical practices. Here, the intricate negotiations of context, personal, historical, social, economic and political factors were highlighted. It shows the hegemony that surrounds powerful knowledge constructions of English and mathematics. For the teachers, these learning areas were the means to provide learners with access to success, not only for schooling, but for future success as well. Here, the focus on powerful knowledge came up against what was valued by learners. Teachers used learners' own culturally valued knowledge as a means to induct learners into powerful legitimated official school knowledge. This was not altogether successful, for learners continued to face repeated failure, and the argument about what knowledge should be taught in South African schools is brought to the fore. In this, one finds that learners faced exclusion

on many fronts, where they are unable to access powerful knowledge through repeated failure; their own culturally valued knowledge is taught in deficient ways; and they are not exposed to knowledge, skills and means in which to navigate school as well as their own environment, because teachers do not engage with issues that are in the environment.

Teachers own lack of pedagogical skill and knowledge was also emphasised, and this had a negative impact into the kinds of opportunities to learn with which learners were provided. Teachers who displayed poor pedagogical and instructional skill exposed learners to lessons that had low cognitive demand, poor content quality and the ineffective use of time. On the other hand, some teachers' classrooms were characteristic of hard caring. In these classrooms, teachers had good content knowledge; teachers themselves were highly intellectual and had high expectations of learners. They exposed learners to intellectual demanding lessons, where they resisted normative understandings of what their learners could do. They survived in conditions that were somewhat debilitating, but made attempts to individualise learning to ensure that all learners could be supported and guided through the learning process. In these classrooms, learners could claim agency and control over their own work, which was intellectually stimulating and demanding. In this way teachers were able to practise social justice and equity to learners through the provision of quality access to schooling.

Chapter Eight: Discussion and Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

In the previous data analysis chapters, I presented the analysis of teachers' narratives and their classroom practices. The empirical evidence established that the teachers made strategic and pragmatic decisions and expressed multiple ways of understanding their practice, their reality and themselves. This chapter honours the spirit and hearts of the teachers who shared their stories with me, and thus I emphasise the unique and significant contributions that these narratives have revealed. The purpose of this concluding chapter is to synthesise the findings of the study as well as to provide an overview of the significance of the research decisions that were made. To this end, I firstly revisit the intentions and the significance of the study in order to ensure that the initial intentions of the study were fulfilled. Thereafter, I review the value in my decisions to use bricolage as a tool to unravel the data, and the extent to which this proved useful. I follow this with a discussion of the findings that emerged from the data analysis that represents teachers' intuitive understandings and practices of social justice and equity. I provide an understanding of the extent to which these findings address the research questions that guided this research. Based on the findings that emerged and the analytical decisions that I made, I then discuss what original contributions can be gained from the study that offer alternative understandings to social justice and equity. Finally, I reflect on the limitations of the study and provide recommendations for future research.

8.2 Returning to the Intentions and Significance of the Study

In this section, I revisit the intention of the study, highlighting what is most significant. From the conceptualisation of this research, it was my desire that this research would contribute to the personal, social and political re-framing of Black teachers' work. I wanted to explore and understand the practices of Black teachers in a manner that positioned them as agential, critical beings, but who worked in different ways to achieve social justice and equity for their learners.

The overarching research aim in this study was therefore to understand the social justice and equity practices and experiences of teachers who worked in marginalised contexts. This required an understanding of who these teachers were, and what motivated and drove their practice. In this, I was able to understand the difficulties and dilemmas that they encountered daily in trying to work towards the ideals of social justice and equity. The following research question was my broad problematic where I asked: what are the complexities that teachers

encounter when they work towards social justice and equity? Because I used an emergent process to data analysis and research, the following, more finely-tuned research questions were developed to illuminate their social justice and equity practices:

1. How do teachers negotiate their identity within their everyday practices of social justice and equity? What positions do teachers take up in their practices of social justice and equity, and why do they take up these positions?
2. What are the struggles, tensions and contradictions that surround teachers' practices of responsibility and care?
3. What are teachers' pedagogical practices of social justice and equity in the classroom? How do teachers negotiate various contextual factors and tensions evident in their classroom practice?

I now reflect on the methodological decisions that I made in trying to delve deeply into these practices.

8.3 Reflection on the Decision to Use Bricolage

In this section I reflect on the analytical and theoretical bricolage approach that I used in this study, and I assess its suitability and effectiveness. Firstly, I used an analytical bricolage as a framework to analyse the data, combining narrative inquiry with grounded theory approaches that entailed both deductive and analytical strategies. My decision to use the narrative approach as a means to collect data proved invaluable. Using interviews as one of the primary ways to capture the teachers' stories helped me to unravel the nuances that characterised teachers' daily experiences. The research stories (Sikes & Gale, 2006) crafted, represented the identities of the teachers, whose personal and professional lives became meaningful in their constant negotiation and renegotiation of their contexts. Through their narratives, I was able to understand and empathise with their struggles, tensions, contradictions, joys and triumphs, and ultimately their emotional rewards (Johnson & Golombek (2002). The temporal, spatial and sociality common-places evident in their stories were woven into the analysis and interpretations that allowed me to appreciate the personal, social and professional lives of teachers.

Narrative inquiry allowed me to find alternative understandings of Black teachers' practices that highlight their strengths and detailed their contexts. Through their stories, I was able to

explore the complexities and complicatedness of identity, and the multiple ways in which teachers negotiated these. It showed teachers' real desires to make a difference. They worked with perplexing identities that were influenced and embodied by historical and religious habitus that seemed to 'compel' them to continue to work hard, despite being constantly rebuffed by their learners, community and the broader educational context.

Stories revealed teachers' own resolve in creating lives that were congruent with their lived personal and professional selves. This research indicated teachers' practices of social justice and equity were intricate, multi-dimensional, fragmented processes that often resulted in pragmatic realisations of what was possible. The intricate relationships between identity and practice emerged. Regardless of the uncertainty and disequilibrium that teachers experienced working in poor contexts that had a lack of resources, and where they were exposed daily to traumatic social issues and internal and external pressure, teachers were agential meaning-making beings. Their narratives revealed teachers' practices could be described as pragmatic orientations to their contexts. In an extremely personal way, I celebrate, acknowledge and recognise the efforts of committed teachers teaching in high-poverty schools.

I also made use of the grounded theory approach to analyse the data. Grounded theory was immensely valuable in ensuring that I stayed close to the data and true to my epistemological and theoretical influences. This not only provided me with the tools to ensure that analysis was grounded in the data, but that emergent themes or categories were reflective of the narratives of the teachers. Thus, the approach enabled me to produce rich and productive data that complemented teachers' ways of knowing, living and practising. The analytical procedures brought the interrelationship between teachers' religious, historical, cultural and social milieu and its influence on how they lived and practised into greater relief. Charmaz (2005) indicates that grounded theory can and should be applied to research that aims to contribute to social justice, and through the analytical process, I was able to eventuate the themes that illuminate such practices.

I found Glaser and Holton's (2007) advice pertinent, which indicates that using grounded theory is a process that is time-consuming, as well as emotionally-consuming. Pandit (1996) cautions novice researchers about the difficulties but this should not dissuade new researchers. I do however believe that the decision to use this approach must be made at the beginning of the research rather than at the analysis stage as evident in this study. I used

mind-maps instead of memoing to make the necessary conceptual connections and to integrate and generate the themes. This process proved most difficult and I was obliged to “exercise patience and accept nothing until something happens”, in order to avoid “leaving the research empty and theory thin and incomplete” (Glaser & Holton, 2007, p. 63). Through the interactive and iterative process of mind-mapping, analytical questions and constant comparison, I was able to justify my analytical decisions. In this way, data had to fit and earn their way into my research in order to be relevant (Charmaz, 2012). This also meant constantly modifying my understanding and being flexible in my thought process. My attention to detail has been outlined in Chapter 4 and showed my attempts to do this. Whilst using this approach was time-consuming and frustrating, it did ensure rigour, relevance and fit. A new researcher, using this combined methodology, must be open and flexible to new and evolving ideas and processes.

Bricolage thus proved significant and useful to the study, and in my search for new answers to old problems, I had to be creative and open to new ways of thinking, exploring and analysing my data. This, however proved more difficult to do, for I constantly felt the need to follow a system or a way that would provide me with structure. I felt at odds with my practice of trying to emphasise and highlight teachers as individuals who have disparate and divergent views, and who make complicated decisions. On the other hand, I still felt the need to corral these processes into particular analytical strategies. I felt constrained by academic conventions, issues of rigour and credibility and the pressure to find a methodological home. I had to remind myself of the interchange between convention and meaning, where there is the possibility of a discontinuity that may prove frustrating, bewildering and disempowering.

Whilst I argued for the use of bricolage because it allowed multiple entry points to interpret data, the findings reveal that for the most part, teachers’ practices, values and beliefs are a reflection of wider societal norms, values and beliefs. Thus, to this extent, the theoretical and conceptual use of bricolage did not allow for new understandings to emerge. What using this methodology did provide was new insight into the complexities surrounding teachers’ negotiation of norms, values, beliefs and contexts. Such negotiations and responses were both pragmatic and unique and allowed for the “creat[ion of] something new out of what already exists” (Altglass, 2014, p. 477) as a response to the prevailing discourses that subverts this good/bad binary within discourse. Bricolage did allow me to understand individuals as agential beings, who are constantly in the process of becoming, and never ‘finished’.

The analytical bricolage also included deductive and inductive analysis, and substantiated on the complexities of teachers' practices. Deductive analysis provided me with the way to understand and think about teachers' classroom practices. Here, I used Bernstein's classification and framing language. I was able to use this language and analytical framework to analyse, for example, what knowledge was taught and how this provided access to legitimate knowledge that could make a difference in learners' lives. This gave me insight into their pedagogical practices of social justice and equity. Whilst Bernstein provided this useful analytical framework, I needed to understand why teachers practised in the manner that they did, and how they negotiated the various contextual contradictions. In this regard, his theory did not provide me with the necessary means to place teachers at the epicentre of my research and nor was I able to capture the complexities, subtleties and nuances that surrounded teachers' practice of social justice and equity. I also wanted to use Bernstein's framework differently. A survey of literature in South Africa that used the Bernstein framework were mostly comparative studies that did not really provide an answer or understanding of what occurs differently in contexts, and the complexities that are reflective of teachers' practices are not fully explored. Moreover, these studies tend to present working-class schools in a manner that I believe add to the deficient discourses that prevail. Thus, I needed to extend the analysis to include narrative and grounded theory in order for the voices of teachers to be heard. I believe that Bernstein's framework should include others that can present a holistic understanding of what occurs within marginalised contexts that do not 'other' 'otherness' (Burck, 2005).

8.4 Discussing the Findings of the Study

In this section I reflect on what can be ultimately gained from this research in relation to my research questions. However, there are no definitive, decisive answers. Instead, I proffer a glimpse into the myriad complexities, tensions, contradictions and uncertainties that surround teachers' practices of social justice, showing both the possibilities and the impossibilities of their role to make "*a change for a lifetime*" (Sthe, FI). The research raises questions that Bernstein called attention to in the 1960s, where he argued that education cannot compensate for society, and has implications for teacher-education programmes at higher education institutions, the Department of Education and teachers themselves. My study challenges the romantic idealism that is implicit in social justice and equity theory and policy and has implications for my own work within social justice. Any study into social justice and equity must be more cognisant of the undue strain that is woven into practice, and which compels

teachers to aspire to reach impossible ideals. What follows is a distillation of the teachers' narratives as they unfolded to reveal the twists and turns in their search for authentic relation-to-self. This is symbolic of their inter-personal interactions with their social and political history, their educational experiences, their knowledge of inherent inequality in their teaching contexts and knowledge of their learners (Lopez & Calapez, 2012). The narratives that emerged were richly and deeply textured, budding with **continued hope and action**. In this, the humanness of teachers is captured. This understanding positions teachers in a special place of respect and empathy for their work and calls for renewed research that details teachers' struggles for social justice and equity within marginalised schools and classrooms that abound with systemic inequalities and inequities. Consequently, teachers' narratives express a myriad of emotions, complexities, tensions, uncertainties and contradictions about their work.

8.4.1. Navigating teacher identity.

The findings from Chapter Five give recognition to how identity is constituted and reconstituted and capture the relational and personal dimension of identity (re)formation in teachers' practices of equity and social justice. Analysis of the data detailed teachers' attempts to author themselves in particular ways that were complex, intricate and contradictory. Whilst having no theoretical understanding of the concepts of social justice and equity, teachers' understanding was based on a lived understanding and realisation that informed their practices.

Teachers' historical accounts reveal extreme personal adversity that was indicative of people growing up during apartheid. Despite political, economic, cultural and social impediments of this, teachers developed resilience, tenacity, adaptability and commitment that challenged deficit constructions of who they were. Adversarial conditions however continued to plague the lives of teachers and the personal identity resources that they had developed due to their historical circumstances sometimes proved challenging to uphold when faced with their current teaching realities. But how were teachers able to negotiate these inequitable contexts? What gave them the tools to do this? Their relational and moral values became the mediating tools for their professional practice and relationships with their learners. It shows that even at the beginning of their teaching careers, commitment, care and responsibility were embedded within their personal identities and influenced their professional habitus and identity.

Firstly, teachers were extremely reflexive and had profound self-knowledge of their teaching roles and responsibilities that helped them negotiate the complex space and place of their teaching contexts. This illustrates their struggles for recognition and their battles to author their own lives. Their own personal values developed through their personal histories and influenced by present Constitutional, democratic goals, educational policy and discourses, provided a complex interaction that teachers had to negotiate in their search for the 'ought self'. In policy, teachers are expected to enact the ideals of social justice and equity and to be dedicated and caring. Teachers struggled to maintain and realise this, showing the complex interplay of external demands and internal conditions that precludes tidy realisations. The stark inequality that they encounter daily further complicates practice. Teachers struggle to remain resilient; they struggle to maintain being correctly responsive and effective all the time and their personal and professional struggles are evident (Perumal, 2014). Instead, teachers' actions are a strategic, pragmatic realisation of what needs to be done. It was the only way in which they could respond to the 'infinite call of the 'Other' who had such overwhelming needs (Levinas, 1969). Their responses were human responses showcasing the positive and negative struggles. This resulted in shifts and changes in who they believed themselves to be, which often led to self-doubt and self-recrimination. The multiple dimensions of the teachers' identity were revealed as fragile, fragmented, unstable and in a state of flux.

Teachers had to constantly negotiate and renegotiate their personal and professional identities, their personal values and social demands as a way to craft personally meaningful understandings of themselves, their work, their learners' needs and their purpose. These values served as internalised, embodied prescription and investment into their learners, who continued to face social inequality and injustice. Teachers, through reflexivity and self-scrutiny, took up particular subject positions in relation to their learners, for example caregiver, financial supporter, all-rounder and moral socialising agent. These different positions were based on what teachers believed learners required from them and were also influenced by their own personal and professional values.

Secondly, religion and teachers' religious identity were essential to teachers' construction of their personal and professional identities. Teachers' own personal religious identity was reflective of the dominant institutional identity that positioned Christianity as the discursive authority. In this, Christian values, norms and practices governed, shaped, regulated and

provided teachers with the knowledge of what kinds of relationship should be maintained and how they should be maintained. The relationships required that they take up various positions that proved constraining and limiting. The multiple positions and roles of stewards of God, parents, supporter, all-rounder, moral teachers and caregiver obligated teachers to respond, but their responses were contradictory and complex. Christianity was the moral orientating tools that gave teachers the necessary authority, control and legitimacy to do their work.

Complex contextual issues often arose, presenting teachers with ethical dilemmas that resonated with a ‘divided self’ held hostage to an ‘embodied personal sense-of-self’ (Bergmark & Alerby, 2006). There was dynamic interaction with community conventions, their Christian beliefs, their personal histories, their institutional roles and policy, and broader social and human rights discourse and negotiating this presented turmoil to teachers. They were held hostage to their own personal identities, where they struggled to challenge their own beliefs and values. This was evident in Ngubs and B.V.’s view that all learners should follow the Christian faith and the institutional religious identity. Their sometimes negative emotional experiences were as a result of treasured beliefs, practices and principles being challenged and rendered inconsequential (Flores & Day, 2006). This same struggle can be found, for example, in how corporal punishment was understood and practised, which left teachers unsure of their role. They were positioned as parents who had a particular socialising function, but they found it confusing and challenging to fulfil this role. The decisions they reached were based more on what was legally and financially viable. But this left them in a quandary, for they did not know what to do to maintain control and authority and ensure learning. Instead, teachers feel a sense of disequilibrium, where their taken-for-granted beliefs, values and interpretative tools no longer provide them with the safe means to negotiate their identity.

In the absence of educational panacea, many teachers turned to their positions or roles as stewards and their sense of accountability to God to reconfigure ways of acting that make sense to them. This reinforces the idea that teaching is a ‘calling’ and a noble act. But this, Perumal (2014, p.13) indicates, “keep teachers tied to the exacting demands of nurturance pedagogies”, which devalues teachers’ practices and keeps them in a constant state of flux, always reaching for the impossible ideal. The teachers, who hold onto strongly embedded and ingrained religious and personal habitus, find it difficult to reach a coherent self, but at other times, personal values and justifications provide them with the orienting tools to construct

acceptable identities. Their narratives show how multiple identities of teacher, disciplinarian, minister, caregiver, and professional roles are in constant dynamic negotiation. The harsh reality that teachers encounter daily and in which learners live, questions the demands placed on teachers to compensate for society that results in personal sacrifice and fragmented disenchanted educators. My research calls for a re-visioning within education of what is possible for educators to do in untenable contexts, and the need for wider public discourse to recognise and acknowledge the challenges that many teachers face. Moreover, the struggles for identity need to also be acknowledged, for teachers constantly find themselves in uncertain spaces that make them question who they are.

Lastly, teachers understanding of caring as part of a continuum of tradition, culture, religion and context was crucial to how and why caring was important for teachers' practices of social justice and equity (Thompson, 2003). In this, caring is not situated as a private occurrence as advocated by mainstream discourse (Thompson, 2003) but is instead a public, political act, where teachers enactment is a form of activism and a willingness and commitment to uplifting their students. Working in such context of great need, stark inequality, high levels of crime, drugs, alcoholism, absentee parents, HIV, extreme poverty and unemployment required that teachers take on these various roles of caring parent, provider and socialising agent. Teachers took on these roles with very little objection or resistance, but their decisions and actions often left them feeling vulnerable, and at times overwhelmed by the sheer weight of the demand.

This led them to sacrifice their own needs to that of their learners, because of their personal sense of responsibility. Teachers' narratives were indicative of teachers in a quandary of having to fulfil their assigned social identity and roles and encountering disinterest, disrespect and demotivated learners and parents. These resulted in ethical dilemmas and identity trials, where teachers struggled to create and (re)create a social reality that matched their own personal vision with what was occurring in their professional lives. This often led to teachers who at times invested and then disinvested in their attempts to make sense of their practice and themselves. This points to the dynamic, ongoing struggle of sense-making, (re) interpretation and (re)formation of their own experiences and values (MacLure, 1993; Flores & Day, 2006).

This study provides a pluralistic understanding of caring that also positions teachers' pragmatic responses. Critical care was an expression and response to surrounding contexts. The distancing between home and school evident in the study often meant that parents did not play a crucial role in schooling. Caring on the part of teachers did not extend to the homes of the learners. Instead, the school and the classroom became the homes of learners. They attempted to enact a form of hard caring that positioned both the academic and personal as vital to the teaching and learning process. This is significant of high quality relationship where teachers' classrooms became safe havens for learners, and where teachers made attempts to protect learners against the harshness of their everyday lives. However, teachers' stances challenged the romantic idealism of social justice and equity and their pragmatic attempts to care for learners and to fight inequality in the micro-level of the classroom were indicative of this.

Teachers' practices evidenced an overarching concern with providing learners with the means to survive the day, rather than with challenge to the system. Teachers' choices and actions are limited and restricted. The ideals of social justice and equity are elusive goals, but they are what drive their practices. These goals are the motivating resources or props that teachers use to give them a sense of purpose, for they recognise that learners require support and assistance that they have the ability to give. It is a standard that teachers measure themselves against, and despite failing to achieve it, these ideals provide them with the inspiration to continue. In trying to achieve this sense of personal accountability and responsibility for learners' lives, teachers are forced to (re)create and cultivate values and identities on their own terms, where strategic pragmatic orientations towards survival take precedence, and then working towards making a difference in the classroom, which can be characterised as a form of hard caring. The outside world is a yet-to-be considered factor in their work towards social justice and equity. It is difficult and complex, but this hard caring is what ensures that in some way, their learners have access to the culture of power that is implicit in schooling.

8.4.2. The complex emotional struggles of teachers

Chapter Six explored the emotional upheavals that teachers encounter in the struggles for social justice and equity imperatives of responsibility and care. The findings here troubled the ethic of responsibility implicit in social justice, equity and human rights discourses, and questioned the possibilities of social justice and equity realisations within contexts of

compounded disadvantage (Kenway, 2013). Here the imperfections and flaws of teachers are brought under the spotlight, emphasising their humanness.

Firstly, teachers worked in contexts where the value and purpose of education was questioned by parents, learners and the wider community. The importance of parental involvement was crucial for learners' academic success, but often parents displayed a lack of interest in the education of their children. This was compounded by learners themselves, who were disinterested, and sometimes unappreciative of the efforts from teachers. This left teachers bewildered and confused, because this struck at the heart of what and who they were. Their historical and biographical narratives of growing up under apartheid positioned education as crucial to challenging systemic inequality. But this same value was being discounted by parents and learners. However, parents' and learners' disinterest must be seen against the backdrop of what is occurring presently in South Africa and the political implications of high levels of unemployment. Parents, learners and the community are aware that despite educational qualifications of many people in their community, it is nearly impossible to secure employment. Thus, the political implications of high unemployment levels influenced by liberal meritocracy evident in education, only served to prove to parents and learners that education was not the vehicle for success. These realisations deepened the chasm between the school and the community.

The complexity and uncertainty of teachers' practices are positioned quite strongly with classrooms and schooling contexts reverberating with dangerous emotional work (Connell, 1985, 2009). Findings here resonate with that of Connell's (2009) study, where teachers are steadily disintegrating, laden under the "endless demands of total involvement", current pressure on teachers to be "endlessly rising to challenges, doing more with less" with very little support and appreciation (p. 220-221). At the end of the day, teachers are human (Nias, 2002) and are fallible, and experience emotions that are more indelibly felt when they take on such extreme responsibility for the future of learners. Teachers undertook emotional labour that contributed to feelings of burnout, emotional disorientation and demoralisation.

But in trying to be all things to all learners, teachers like Ghettoh, Zippo, B.V. and Ngubs suffer often in silence. They are no longer able to access the moral rewards of teaching, and despite their commitment and passion, learners remain academically unsuccessful. B.V. tried to find joy and motivation in whatever presents itself, even in little motivational tools like

helping learners find a pen. These little moments of joy and isolated feelings of control provide teachers like B.V. with a little more reserve and energy to continue for the next day. This resembles Lortie's (1975) understanding of presentism, where being surrounded by such intense pressure exerted from internal and external spaces, a teacher seeks out rewards that are immediate and in the present, and so she focuses on short-term results.

The psychic rewards (Lortie, 1975) of being able to help learners find pens to use during class show how presentism occurs. For B.V. in particular, she is wracked by feelings of uncertainty when it comes to the academic achievement and future success of learners. She clings to what she can feel positive about in the present, and does not consider what may or may not occur in the future (Hargreaves, 2010). For her, these 'just in time' short-term rewards are what give her a feeling of control and agency over her work, in terms of her own internal psychic rewards (Hargreaves, 2010). It is what makes her continue, despite the fact that she is tired and waits for retirement. She, as well as the other teachers, knows that if they do not continue to try, the hopes and dreams of learners becoming successful people will be lost.

A crucial finding emerging from the study is the complexity that surrounds responsibility and care in a period and context of high needs, internal and external accountability and demand. Zippo, Sthe, Ghettoh, B.V. and Ngubs complained about such excessive demands, and this led to them expressing deep emotional work. For Ngub, B.V. and Evange in particular, their emotional work is representative of burnout, internal disquiet and demoralisation. The findings challenge not only teachers' embodied practice but also Levinas' and Bauman's respective positioning of responsibility and care as a human condition, where self-worth is only a realisation in giving to the "Other", and it is not a human condition (Biesta, 2004). Biesta (2004) indicates that to understand accountability, one needs to ask the question as to who one is being held accountable to. For the teachers, accountability was firstly deeply personal and professional, or internal, but departmental and public discourse also claimed an external space. External accountability, as the narratives of Sthe and Ngubs revealed, was divisive, and also promoted competition, evident through the Annual National Assessment and other international test results made visible in the media. In such competitive and divisive environments, teaching for social justice and equity, with its emphasis on cooperation and relationship building, is a seemingly impossible task. What are lost in this external demanding climate are the relationships that teachers have built with their learners, as well as

their own sense-of-self, that ultimately leads to demoralisation and burnout. This is compounded by their feelings of a lack of control and agency over their own pedagogical and instructional practices.

Following Levinas (1969), teachers responded to the infinite call of the ‘Other’, without any inclination towards reciprocity from learners when it came to meeting their pastoral needs. However, in the face of the obligation to navigate learners’ living trauma, their experiences of a repeated lack of academic success, contexts where the purpose and value of education were questioned; public derision and disapproval that blamed and shamed, and external accountability demand, teachers like Sthe and Ngubs began to falter. They experienced a sense of disequilibrium and the proximity relationship (Levinas, 1969) now resulted in distancing, breaking and severing of relationships. In this instance, Ngubs and Sthe lost their ability to pay attention to the structural impediments that constrain learners’ success. The relationship with the ‘Other’ dissolved into a relationship with the ‘many’, resulting in a termination of the responsibility for that ‘Otherness.’ Ngubs, Sthe, Ghetto, Zippo and Joel either blamed the learners, the parents, other stakeholders or they turned the blame inwardly, resulting in intense feeling of demoralisation, burnout and disquiet. Ngubs and Sthe in particular could no longer feel responsibility for the ‘Other’ without expecting something in return. They thus struggled with their divided, fragile selves in a context that questioned their commitment, efficacy and moral capacity. When teachers found that the moral and emotional rewards developed and treasured by their relationship with the ‘Other’ were lost, they questioned their own sense of self-worth with failure, being a “reflection upon their own worth as people” (Nias, 2002, p.205).

This finding is crucial, for it reveals the complexity and uncertainty that is implicit in responsibility and care that surround trying to achieve academic success. A deeper, more finely grained understanding questions what happens when internal and external demands place responsibility under scrutiny and attack. What my study reveals is that responsibility is not natural and effortless, and that the “obligations that are inherent, ultimately present teachers with no vision and shaping of an ethical future” (Beasley & Bacchi, 2005, p. 58). It adds to a new way to understand the ethic of responsibility and care in a complex interaction between “subjectivity, embodiment, intimacy, social institutions and social interconnection” (Beasley & Bacchi, 2005, p. 59). The findings from the study question the kinds of relationships that care and responsibility ethics call for. Teachers felt responsible for learners

and went beyond what was expected to help learners but in so doing create learners who are dependent on them forming an unequal relationship. What happens when learners question the value of education and ultimately of teachers, when learners refuse and question teachers' responsibility towards them, or when, despite such extreme effort, learners are disinterested and continue to experience failure? The power dynamics turn the relationship on its head, changing the dynamics of relationship building that teachers find confusing to negotiate, and have implications for their emotional wellbeing.

This responsibility and care relationship is made even more difficult and complex because despite this constant rejection, failure and self-questioning, some teachers still continue to try to help learners achieve academically, because of their own embodied personal and professional sense of accountability. This is also reinforced by human rights and social justice discourses that pinpoint education and its teacher workforce as pivotal to pedagogical justice for marginalised learners. For this reason, teachers practise in continued hope that their efforts will make a difference and transform the lives of their learners. Thus, the findings challenge the dynamics that surround the responsibility and care ethics that focus only on teachers' beneficence and magnanimity. Here I include learner resistance to teachers' efforts that result in a form of emotional trauma for teachers. Studies in this area would need to focus on understanding human interdependence, which challenges the tidy connections between the beneficent teacher and the needy 'Other' endemic to dominant narratives of teaching.

8.4.3 Understanding the pedagogical practices of teachers

Chapter Seven delved into teachers' practices of equity and social justice within the classroom. It required careful consideration of how teachers negotiate contextual influences on their classroom practice. From the analysis, the following key aspects were identified to detail the intricate nature of teachers' pedagogy and decision-making, namely, negotiating knowledge construction, impediments to learners' access to quality education and responsive learner pedagogy. These three aspects provide a systemic image in understanding teachers' pedagogical practices in marginalised contexts.

8.4.3.1 Negotiating how knowledge is constructed

This thesis makes a contribution to alternative ways to theorising and understanding the role of both powerful and culturally relevant knowledge as a means to epistemic access. It adds to the current debates around knowledge presently evident in South African education. Bernstein's argument concerns how knowledge is structured and the different kinds of

interactions and relationships to it. Young (2003b, p. 560) indicates that to understand knowledge, one must first recognise that the differentiation between “theoretical and everyday knowledge [is] fundamental to what education is about”. For him and other social realists, the purpose of education is for learners to be able to work with powerful knowledge in ways that would allow them access to quality education and success, as a form of distributive justice. The teacher is meant to provide learners with the required realisation and recognition rules to acquire this knowledge and to produce meaning. This is an important understanding, especially for working-class learners, because (as so poignantly encapsulated by Ngubs), teachers are the “*sole source of information*” for learners in this kind of context. This is the same understanding that Shalem and Hoadley (2009) proffer, who extend this idea further to indicate that this is because parents are unable to “model or mediate the cognitive demands of the school” (p. 129).

Social justice arguments found in critical multiculturalism, social justice and equity pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy and critical pedagogy are related to understanding the *how* of knowledge. Here, knowledge and social practice in the world outside of the classroom is also emphasised. However, what is revealed in my study is how knowledge in mathematics and English is understood by parents as well as the community and the learners, and engaged with the difficulties and contradictions that arose for teachers in trying to negotiate this understanding. Teachers had to negotiate this as well as wider social, historical and political discourses that promoted these subjects as powerful, useful and legitimate. Whilst parents regarded mathematics as difficult, they did not question its validity, importance and legitimacy. Evange, Zippo and Sthe, for example, constructed mathematics as delocalised, timeless, consistent, powerful and objective. Sthe and Evange lessons in particular were characterised by high intellectual demand and rigorous teaching. In their lessons, learners were encouraged to engage in critical understandings of their academic realities, but not their social realities. This was essentially about issues of control for these teachers. Within the confines of the classroom, teachers could expose learners to knowledge that would allow them to navigate the schooling context successfully, but not to navigate their outside world. Teachers like Evange, for example, make choices, weighing the opportunity costs of what he is able to do and realise. He has no control over the outside world, he cannot anticipate outcomes and nor can he make a difference to what occurs in the social context, so he opts for using his resources towards that which is achievable and realisable in the classroom.

The contradictions arise when it comes to English. The teaching and construction of the subject identity is influenced by Noel, Ngubs, Ghettoh and B.V.'s social and ideological repertoires rooted in their social, historical and emotional experiences that influenced their current classroom practice. Ultimately, these teachers had to negotiate aspects of dominance and access associated with English, and whilst these are usually on polar ends, they came together in complex interactions that teachers found difficult to mediate (Janks, 2000). The English teachers used their affective dispositions to re-create and construct the social linguistic world of learners; but in so doing, positioned isiZulu - a language held important for learners, parents and community - in deficit ways. In their micro-political decision-making, influenced also by institutional policy, teachers believed that social justice and equity could only be achieved through ensuring that learners had access to the dominant and official language of English, but this in effect reinforced the dominance and power implicit in this knowledge.

It was this decision by teachers that came into conflict with learners and parents, who teachers believed questioned the validity, power and legitimacy of English, relegating English to being valuable only within the confines of the classroom and schooling context. English remains largely symbolic in the lives of learners and parents, who neither use it nor practise it together. This raises questions for Social Realism and Bernsteinians and social justice theorists as to what happens when the value of powerful knowledge is questioned by the people who it is supposed to help. For 'robust curriculum justice' to occur, there must be a re-examination of the ethical underpinnings of curriculum knowledge. My study has shown how, in attempting to redistribute powerful knowledge to learners, the culturally valued knowledge of the learners is not given the recognition that is needed, and thus, redistributive justice cannot occur (Zipin et al., 2015).

This is compounded by the teachers themselves, who lacked subject and instructional knowledge and pedagogic content knowledge (Christie, 2008) as evident in the teaching of poetry by Ngubs and low cognitive demand in Joel's lessons, or Ghettoh's failure to use culturally relevant knowledge to challenge existing social and gender inequality in the community, resulting in deficit understanding of the community. Ghettoh also does not capitalise on an opportunity to engage with issues of racism, sexism and classism that underpin the fabric of South African society, which have resulted in young children having relationships with older men and women as a form of supplementary income. But these are

teachers who are partly products of their history, and lack the support of government and institutions to change practice. But they make the effort to change their instructional practice, through professional development programmes from non-governmental organisations, which teach them alternative ways to think about their pedagogical practice.

They also have after-school classes, providing learners with individual attention, but success eludes both the teachers and the learners. The imagined English community that teachers hoped for instead created disinvestment by learners, reinforcing the extent of the divide between the community, learners and parents on one side, and teachers and schooling on the other. Here, teachers feel a sense of hopelessness, despair and concern. They struggled to negotiate themselves in a context that positions them as the sole provider of knowledge, but also devalues and rejects their efforts. The resistance by learners to school knowledge may have dire repercussions for learners trapping them in repeated cycles of rejection and failure. Deep structural and systemic inequality and misrecognition of the needs of the community continue to engender failure. This raises questions for Social Realism and various strands of social justice and equity pedagogy, around whose knowledge and what knowledge.

But this is not only about how powerful knowledge is understood and practised by teachers. Whilst repeated failure can be attributed to poor pedagogical practices that prevent this access, the question still remains as to what happens when, regardless of efforts to improve, parents and learners question the validity of school knowledge. Findings reveal that this understanding is essentially about powerful knowledge and how it relates to learners and the misrecognition of what the community needs. It is also a community surrounded by examples of failure, in the form of failure to find employment, failure associated with poverty, and the failure by the government and society to challenge systemic barriers. Bourdieu (1991) draws attention to the misrecognition that occurs between all stakeholders in education. Despite glaring problems in the education system, we continue to provide an education that misrecognises the needs of people, and an education system that continues to exert symbolic power associated with dominant forms of knowledge. Whilst the education system as a whole fails to provide these learners with the necessary knowledge of and access to, for example, English, it continues to force its legitimation through the teaching of the subject. Learners continue to feel its legitimacy and power through their repeated failure and the glaring recognition that it is important for their success (Bourdieu, 1991).

This shows the difficulties that surround the teachers' negotiation of access to knowledge. In counting and weighing the opportunity costs, teachers believed that powerful knowledge was the means through which learners could gain the required epistemic access, and so be successful at school. This worth was recognised by the English teachers in particular. They also, for example, saw its worth because it was their way of providing learners with the means to negotiate their learning spaces, in order, specifically, to gain access to the culture of power that comes with powerful knowledge. However, in doing and believing this, they also legitimate powerful knowledge as a dominant form of knowledge.

For the teachers in the study, parents, learners and the wider community do not value the English language, as it does not provide them with any opportunities. These understandings and conclusions were based on their interactions with parents and community members. Parents, like teachers, weigh up the opportunity costs, and for them, communication and language bonds far outweigh the cost of the effort to learn another language that only provides their children with failure, both in the class and in the world. Thus, the teachers' reading of the value of powerful knowledge does not match the realities of parents and learners. They also fail to take the opportunity to view their learners' own funds of knowledge as assets to the learning process. Ghettoh, for example, uses learners' 'funds of knowledge' or culturally relevant knowledge of 'sugar daddy' dynamics, but it is ineffectively carried out, rendering learners own knowledge deficit. This is because teachers only recognise powerful knowledge as legitimate knowledge. Whilst teachers have understood the power behind powerful knowledge, they have failed to recognise that powerful knowledge is in fact power- laden. It has the ability to restrict opportunities for their learners. Within the confines of the classroom, the teachers could empower learners with knowledge relevant for education and future success. What is lost in this is teachers' explicit connection to what actually waits for learners when they complete schooling.

Knowledge is instead constructed as neutral, with teachers making the political decisions about what knowledge can do. But these political decisions were mostly about their own practice, rather than the effects of their practice. Learners are not being taught how to question and challenge their positioning within the hierarchy of inequality and disadvantage. This has direct implications for teacher-education programmes, to expose teachers to different social justice traditions and focus areas of concern. This would enable teachers to become more critically conscious of oppression, injustice and inequity on a personal level,

but also to recognise and challenge this on an institutional and societal level. With this understanding, teachers can be empowered to make informed pedagogical decisions about how knowledge is constructed and understood. Teacher-education programmes must also focus specifically on improving the instructional practices of teachers so that access to learning is made easier for learners.

8.4.3.2. Impediments to learners' access to quality education

Teachers' pedagogical practices, however, had both negative and positive implications for learners' access to quality education. Lesson observations revealed that some teachers did not have the necessary pedagogical skill and knowledge to navigate successful learning. English lessons in particular were characterised by low cognitive demands, chanting and chorusing, strong teacher control, passive learners, and a lack of student engagement. Joel and Ngubs' lessons were indicative of high participation rates, but lacking in intellectual quality. The cognitive complexity, based on the questions asked, revealed that it was highest for Evange and Sthe and lowest for the English teachers. This kind of disengaged instruction resulted in learners' experiences of repeated failure that could in some way explain their ambivalent relationship with English and the resultant devaluation of its importance in their lives. The realisation and recognition rules, important for knowledge acquisition were absent, and instead, learners were constructed as doers of knowledge. These experiences continue to mark English as problematic and difficult for learners to access.

Despite teachers' poor pedagogical knowledge, learners and learning were crucial to them. Decisions made were aimed at what teachers believed would serve the interests and needs of learners to enable their success. Teachers were involved in an intricate balancing act between learners' ability, knowledge and external, institutional and personal demands of accountability. Thus, their decisions were to pragmatically accomplish what they could, given large classes, the inability to individualise learning, learning difficulties, and learners themselves, who did not want to take responsibility for their learning. Their responses were based on what they believed would aid learner knowledge and cumulative success. This had implications for how teachers understood the curriculum. They moved between contradictory spaces of feeling comfortable with the new curriculum because it gave clear direction and guidance which they believed was absent in the previous curriculum policy. This then provided them with a sense of control over their work that they had lost in the wake of constant curriculum change. On the other hand, the demands for them to complete the

syllabus placed them under enormous pressure. In this strong climate of accountability – accountability to the Department of Education and the institution, as well as from their colleagues - teachers struggled to position learners as central to their work. However, teachers, especially Evange, challenged this thinking, because it caused dissension on a personal level, negatively determining his personal accountability, passion and his relationships with his learners. For the most part, teachers pacing or rate of transmission practices were dictated to by learners' needs, but this had to be balanced so that slow pacing did not impede the effective use of instructional time for learner success.

8.4.3.3 Learner responsive pedagogy

Some teachers used particular strategies to engage learners critically, to keep them motivated as well as to build mathematics and English identities to enable success. The mathematics teachers were more successful than the English teachers in this regard. Evange and Sthe encouraged learners to question, to challenge and justify their ideas and explanations. Regardless of the lack of language proficiency, students were expected to take up an agential space in the classroom. The voices of students were crucial to these teachers, who offered them safe spaces and learning opportunities to do this. Learners were active co-constructors of knowledge engaging in critical thinking. Evange in particular asked learners to make choices and decisions about their mathematical thinking, and he provided the necessary support to guide them to high quality knowledge. In this process, both teachers and learners were responsible to each other and for their learning.

My study showed how in marginalised contexts, in classrooms evocative of Evange and Sthe practices, not only is student participation possible, but so too is critical thinking. They were exposed to information, methods and skills to negotiate their mathematical world. This provided students with access to skills and knowledge necessary within an academic context. Thus, intra-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary knowledge were used in explicit ways to make multiple connections that were beneficial across and within learning areas. This kind of connected knowledge also allowed learners to think differently, and come up with multiple solutions as well as multiple ways of looking at mathematical concepts. Their insistence on learners being motivated and to practise their language skills were intentional, predetermined and premeditated acts on the part of teachers. This enabled cumulative knowledge building and learning (Matron, 2013). Learning became a personally meaningful and owned process, and aided in the building of positive mathematics identities. Whilst these teachers did not

focus on the outside world, they assumed that the critical thinking and decision-making skills acquired through informed, thoughtful pedagogy in the classroom would be transferred into their social realities.

I have used the concept of survivance in my thesis and adapted it from Vizenor (2008), who indicates that survivance is “renunciations of dominance, detractions, obtrusions, the unbearable sentiments of tragedy, and the legacy of victimry” (p. 1), and I used it in the same way that Joseph (2013) does to show teacher intentionality or acts of practice (Vizenor, 2008). The intentions behind teachers’ practice were not to become victims of a system that demoralised and devalued them. Thus, it is not only about surviving the education system, but also resisting devaluing learners and themselves. I did not anticipate that this concept of survivance would materialise in the study, but it became an important aspect that adequately explained how teachers negotiated their pedagogical work. I have already made reference to the demanding contexts that impacted on teachers and learners. Here, the teachers’ intentions were to provide learners with as many opportunities to achieve success. This required that teachers themselves be adaptable, creative, flexible and responsive to learners’ needs. They questioned the inevitability of failure, challenging the system that placed demands on them. They often went back to re-teach concepts, or to slow the pace of the syllabus to cater for the cognitive needs of all learners. This helped them to build good foundations to aid conceptual development. Teachers strategically shifted time to concentrate on problematic concept learning, they devised catch-up programmes before and after school, used their free time, or the time of absent teachers, with the specific intention of filling in conceptual knowledge-gaps, ensuring in-depth knowledge and improving learners’ ability.

Another strategy was to individualise learning as a way to negotiate large numbers and differing ability and to provide adequate support to learners. Teachers modified their practices to include working with smaller groups and also made effective use of board work. Board work was a useful means to individualise learning, and it gave teachers an opportunity to listen to learners’ thought processes, and then to have an understanding of the level of support required. In this way, teachers like B.V., Sthe, Evange, Zippo were able to affirm and value learners. Collaborative group work is supported in the literature, but this was not possible with small classroom spaces and large numbers. Teachers engaged with collaborative work differently, in a way more suited to what was possible within their classrooms. Through board work Evange and Sthe, for example, encouraged collaborative

thinking through peer interaction. Learners were expected to explain their problem-solving ability and justify their understanding to their peers as well as to the teachers. The control of the learning was placed with the learners, with the teacher taking the role as a facilitator of knowledge, whose role and function was to extend thinking, to consolidate knowledge, to make connections with previous knowledge, and to provide emotional and cognitive support through scaffolding. It was a thinking space for learners shaped by their needs, moving between strongly framed and weakly framed pacing. Through this kind of individualising practice, learners thought-processes were built, firstly through their interaction with the content, and then through the social interaction with their classmates and the teachers. This created a particular kind of learning community that was legitimate in the eyes of the learners, and ensured their participation. This kind of cooperative but communal learning is supported by Ladson-Billings (1995a) study into 'good teaching'.

Such a cooperative environment was made possible because teachers believed in their own intellectual ability, their own pedagogical practice, and their critical capacity to negotiate this complexity. In Evange's classroom, learning and teaching was a deeply rational and intellectual activity. But, given that teaching is a human endeavour, teachers had to mediate the context as well as internal contradictions. Evange, for example, struggled to challenge and transform the practices of the schooling context. In an environment that supported strong teacher control and learner passivity, his ability to be creative and passionate and to promote the process-based approach to mathematics was thwarted. It was an internal war that he waged with himself to try to not to lose his compassionate rationality for his learners and the subject. He was, however, the one teacher who encouraged learners to think differently, to claim authority and agency within the classroom, to extend learners critical thinking through rational, caring, respectful, reasoned and deliberate support. He was able to successfully take dis-embedded vertical knowledge and incorporate it into the lives of learners to develop the required official knowledge. His classroom was significant of high demand, high expectation and intellectual rigour, which proactively constructed learners as powerful. Mistakes were not failures, but rather explorations into understanding and opportunities to learn.

Evange in particular, and other teachers in general, provided a way to explore what was possible to achieve in contexts of such high demand, and the understandings from this study provide knowledge crucial to teacher-education. The concept of survivance for the education context needs to be explored theoretically, as a way to understand how teachers survive high

demanding contexts, and ensure social justice and equity become part of classroom contexts. This will provide teachers with the means to become resilient and resist feelings of hopelessness and uncertainty that surrounds constant failure.

8.5 Original Contributions of this Study

This section draws attention to the original contributions that emerged from the study. This study specified that an intricate, multi-dimensional, dynamic process of relationships underpinned teachers' practices of social justice and equity. Significantly, it showed that despite inequitable and unequal contexts, teachers continue to persevere and are capable of making a difference, albeit it in small steps. They may express dissatisfaction and discontent against what they encounter, but they survive and challenge the domination that plagues their environment. It shows the intricate negotiations and the pragmatic strategic decisions that arise as teachers' author themselves and transform their conditions. It demonstrates the humanness of life, sometimes not always successful, but certainly responsive in imaginative ways. This knowledge itself disrupts essentialising portraits that surround the teaching of Black teachers in general, and more specifically Black teachers in marginalised contexts. Thus, this research positions the work that teachers do and echoes Nieto's (2003) understanding that teaching is about "hope and possibility". Here, teachers who are committed and who have the resiliency to survive and resist, would, if given better resources and professional training, produce endless educational possibilities that may benefit the context in which they now teach.

Methodologically, I made use of both a theoretical and analytical bricolage which allowed for alternative ways to understand and analyse data. The combination of narrative inquiry and grounded theory also contributed to a limited but growing field of research (Lal et al., 2012). Grounded theory methods assisted me to keep the analysis immersed in the lived experiences represented in the narratives of the teachers. In this way, the theoretical underpinnings to 'follow the actor' was maintained, showing the theoretical commensurability of using narrative and grounded theory approaches (Lal et al., 2012).

I add to this commensurability through the use of a conceptual framework that I devised that allowed me to capture the intricate relationships between the teachers, the learners, context, curriculum and their internal struggles, so as to build a coherent authentic personal and professional self. The use of a conceptual framework that I developed from literature is,

according to Charmaz (2012) limited, and my research shows the benefits of using a conceptual framework. Together, these combined theoretical and analytical approaches were useful for it revealed the complex, intricate relationship between social justice and equity, identity development and teachers' experiences. Teacher education programmes need to respond to supporting teachers to build a workable professional identity. Such programmes should not only include the various identity positions that teachers must be able to build, but to also acknowledge that these identities and relationships do not exist, integrate and intersect in neat and explicit ways.

Another significant contribution of this study is the relationship between responsibility and care, as developed by Levinas, (1969) and I extend his philosophy to include that of emotion. Zembylas (2005) has written a theoretical paper using Levinas' (1969) philosophy of responsibility and the 'Other and has extended it to include concepts of witnessing, vigilance and silencing from a position of unknowing. He has also used Levinas in his empirical work on online education and the face-to-face encounter (Zembylas & Vrasidas, 2005). Zembylas, (2005), like Levinas (1969), provides a particular understanding of what ethical relationships should resemble, based on hope and the "positive valuing of the Other" (Zembylas, 2005, p. 155), where the other is seen as a 'gift.' I have not located studies that reveal what happens when the "Other surpasses the teachers' ability to grasp" (Zembylas, 2005, p.155), that is, when the relationship is no longer based on 'being because of', but rather, on reciprocation, and when the ethical relationship is in turmoil. The reciprocation that materialised was as a result of external forms of accountability. Here, the breakdown of relationships was based on feelings of extreme emotion like burnout, self-doubt, disequilibrium and demoralisation.

Learners and parents were involved in an exercise of power where they questioned the value of education and vis-à-vis the value of teachers. I argue that the obligatory response to the call of the "Other" is disrupted in such cases, compounded by the needs of the many, as well as the overwhelming emotions of the teachers. The relationship between the teacher and the learner is not as natural and straightforward, but rather more fluid and complex. Living up to the ideals of ethics, of acknowledging the "other" as a gift, social justice, and equity as well as Christian and personal values, traps teachers in a web that compels them to constantly give of themselves without expecting anything in return. But such relationships disintegrate in the face of constant and never-ending demands that have often led to teachers compromising these ideals and values, which results in self-deprecation and demoralisation.

This has crucial implications for teacher-training and research. Teacher-education programmes would need to be devised and revised that stress teachers' emotions and critical reflexivity. Programmes need to embrace "comprehensive pedagogies that address the whole teacher – the emotional, intellectual and development process of becoming" (Cook, 2009, p. 291). Teachers need to be equipped with the necessary skills to raise difficult questions, to interrogate and problematise their professional work, policy and own practice in order to grow resiliency to teach for change in the most gruelling contexts (Steinberg, 2013). Moreover, teachers need to be provided with support to manage difficult and dangerous emotions (Connell, 1985). I argue that such contexts will not disappear, but teachers' ability to negotiate them must be advanced.

I also add to how knowledge that is taught in school can be understood differently in the context of South Africa. This research troubles what may be regarded and promoted as valuable and valued knowledge. All the teachers in the study believed that access to powerful knowledge was crucial to academic success and powerful official knowledge was the only route. For them, they had to make decisions about the best route to entrenching social justice into their practice. However, providing access to powerful knowledge proved difficult to do. My study shows and challenges the understanding that powerful knowledge is in fact the 'Holy Grail' and that acquiring this knowledge would ensure the future success for learners. For powerful knowledge to gain significance in the South African context, teachers need to have deepened knowledge of contexts, families, culture and powerful knowledge itself.

As evident in my study, this is difficult to do, even though all the teachers were of the same race and experienced the same kinds of hardships growing up. The teachers also expressed views that learners and parents have different kinds of knowledge that they use to successfully traverse and manage their community contexts. This is based on concrete evidence found in their communities that schooling and what is learned in school does not provide them with successful life opportunities. They are able to manage their contexts and their lives without knowledge and use of 'powerful knowledge'. There is thus very little "use-value" associated with powerful knowledge (Zipin et al., 2015). Many of the job opportunities that are available to parents and learners are embedded in their local cultural sites that provide them with ways to access money. In a context like South Africa that has such high unemployment rates, parents and school-leavers find alternative sources of opportunities (that may also be criminal) that do not require powerful knowledge. It is a

difficult living, but they find these alternative ways in which to make a living in the face of a lack of support for the poor.

Secondly, the study reveals that despite having access to ‘powerful knowledge’, the learners still do not experience academic success. It reinforces the understanding that powerful knowledge is still only the prerogative of those who have cultural power. The powerful knowledge found in the curriculum has also become the dominant form of knowledge, which excluded the vast majority of people in South Africa. The repeated lack of success on the part of learners at certain schools shows that accessing powerful knowledge is difficult. But this then calls social justice and equity into question – for if powerful knowledge is touted as the only means to success, then what happens when it doesn’t provide this success. What happens when learners and parents challenge this and point to their repeated lack of success in school and in life but no one seems to be listening? Surely this raises questions and calls for a re-framing of what is or what should be considered ‘knowledge.’ This knowledge should be knowledge that provides all in South Africa regardless of social identity with access to academic success and success in life. I argue, like Zipin, Fataar and Brennan (2015), for the kind of ethical curriculum justice to be promoted in South Africa, that recognises that curriculum is not only about the cognitive but “cognitive-cum-ethical” (p. 33).

I argue for continued research into the concept of survivance and its application in education. It is a concept used to designate both survival against disempowerment and resistance through envisioning something new and different. This concept of survivance was used in this study to understand how teachers actively resisted being disempowered by the overwhelming internal and external demands, and continued to find strategies to empower learners regardless of resistance. Teachers’ ability to survive and resist was due to their own personal and Christian value system, which gave them the reserve to envision something new. This is in line with social justice research, which argues for the pedagogy of hope.

Using the concept of survivance, I was able to find nuanced understandings of teachers’ emotions, their intentions, their motivations, their pedagogic decision-making skills and the determination to find strategic, alternative ways to enable learners to access knowledge and skills. The term survivance can provide researchers with an additional concept to understand the successful work of teachers in highly demanding contexts. In their contexts, teachers were required to make do with very few resources but were still able to provide learners with many

opportunities to learn, as well as access to knowledge that was crucial for academic success, and hopefully, to possible social and economic mobility. Used together with hard caring, I was able to understand the different strategies that teachers use to ensure that the intellectual needs of learners are emphasised. This was important to understand, for teachers pedagogical actions and decisions were then understood as political, ethical realisations. Research using this concept can be extended to include learners' perceptions, and how they negotiate their living contexts, which are frustrated by such intense hardship. Further research can be conducted into the various strategies utilised by teachers to resist systemic oppression such that it provides a clearer understanding of the concept 'survivance' within education.

8.6. Limitations of the Study

The research decisions that any researcher makes naturally imposes limitations on any research study. My research sample was small, and at the analysis stage, I was only able to use data from seven participants. This may be seen as a limitation; however, the use narrative interviews, prolonged observation as well as lesson observation did in some way negate the disadvantages associated with a small sample. The teachers' narrative interviews and lesson observations yielded copious but extensive, richly-textured insight into teachers and their practice of social justice and equity. Thus, I hope that the intricate construction that data analysis called for makes up for my narrowed net of participants. The research was conducted in specific sites of poor, marginalised communities beset by extreme deprivation. However, even in acknowledging this, I cannot with certainty indicate that the manner in which teachers negotiated their classrooms, contexts, their practices of social justice and equity and personal and professional selves would be characteristic of or reflective of other teachers working in similar conditions. What my study does offer, however, is a more nuanced insight into the historical, social and political narratives of Black teachers' experiences that open up spaces for further research.

A further limitation was that the research only included the perspectives and understandings of teachers. Since teaching is a relational interactive process, and the findings from this study provided crucial evidence of how context and interaction matters, it would stand to reason that the perspectives of learners, parents and members of the community would have provided a more detailed and holistic understanding of social justice and equity. Parent and learner interviews could have provided insight into how learners experienced the pedagogical decisions and practices that teachers made.

8.7 Recommendations for Future Research and Teacher Education

A number of issues and questions were raised in this study that could provide motivation for further research and also has implications for teacher-education. This study showed the commensurability of using narrative, grounded and a particular theoretical perspective. Future research could add to this limited area of research by using the grounded approach, together with narrative inquiry, and extend this to add other dimensions like theory or philosophy, to understand a particular phenomenon under study in more rigorous ways.

This study highlights the needs for future research, where researchers themselves are methodological and reflexive regarding possible assumptions about teachers who work in marginalised contexts. Findings in the study provide knowledge of “excluded communities”, and using theory that foregrounds their perspectives, researchers can bring their knowledge and perspectives to “academic consciousness” (Fataar, 2015, p. 1). There needs to be constant interrogation, questioning and disruption of previously held deficit understanding of teachers who work in contexts of social and political inequality. The complexities of such contexts need to be understood more robustly, where basic assumptions and conclusions need to be avoided, opening up space for critical engagement about education. This would provide a more holistic understanding of what occurs in contexts and what possibilities exist to prompt human flourishing (Fataar, 2015).

My research approach and the analytical processes used in this study provide a useful heuristic tool for other researchers who want to advance knowledge in the field of education. Using analytical processes that provide a means to access data interpretation through multiple entry points enables more authentic, reflective, nuanced research. Whilst my research focused on the classroom and schooling practices of teachers, there was complex interplay between dynamics within and out of school that to a large extent determined what kind of learning was possible. Like Fataar (2015), I call for further research that takes this into account to provide “greater conceptual purchase on educational and learning navigation” (2015, p. 12). This relational perspective not only positions teachers at the centre of analysis, but also shows how teachers’ practices and identities are shaped and reshaped in/by multiple spaces. The complexities that surround such unequal and fractal contexts compel particular kinds of responses and negotiations from teachers that affirm or disaffirm them. Using multiple entry points in data analysis allows for a more in-depth purchase on this connected relationship (Fataar, 2015). Such research can capture the contradictions, complexities and tensions

indicative and evident in this study that emerges from teachers and learners “dissonant spatialities” (Fataar, 2012, p. 32) that positions them in particular ways and has implications for what is possible for learners and social justice and equity.

Research into how the various role players in education understand social justice and equity as it unfolds in their lived experiences is also needed. Such research may then provide an understanding of what is needed to forge a relationship with various stakeholders. In so doing, teacher-education programmes can then focus on understanding the relationship between, for example, community, schooling and curriculum as a means of working towards social justice and equity. In this, the teacher must be shown the benefits of different kinds of knowledge i.e. those forms of knowledge that are powerful and dominant, as well as the funds of knowledge present in the community that they marginalise, and how this can be used to provide epistemic access for learners. Learners’ funds of knowledge then can be used as pedagogical resources, rather than as unnecessary and deficient sources that may lead to more active learner engagement. The pedagogical practices of teachers must be foregrounded, where high intellectual demands and rigorous teaching methods, relevance and recognition of learners’ lifeworld/funds of knowledge are emphasised. Research here then can ascertain the use value dimension of knowledge to “realise pedagogical justice” (Fataar, 2012, p. 62) for learners in their contexts. Findings from this study also call for research into ways in which to improve the pedagogical practice of teachers through the use of structured curriculum as well as skills to improve their instructional practices. This would add to similar research already being undertaken for example the Gauteng Primary Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GLPMS) and may prove invaluable in forwarding the social justice agenda through its focus on the provision of high quality structured lessons that takes into account context and instructional practices (Fleisch & Schoër (2014)

The study also delved into the complexity that surrounds teachers’ practices. In this the emotional work and moral distancing that surrounds the discourses of care and responsibility were understood. Future research, teacher workshops and teacher-education programmes need to intellectualise and understand this complex interaction. Teachers need to be provided with spaces to understand their psychological and socio-emotional experiences and the complexities involved in developing a teacher identity. Teacher-education programmes should therefore model and develop the whole teacher. In this, teachers can be shown how to develop dispositions that are reflective, intuitive, sensitive, adaptive and resilient to meet the

challenges involved in social justice and equity. Moreover, such programmes and research can bring about changes to policy that entrenches social justice and equity as naturally occurring practices. Continued research can situate responsibility, care, social justice and equity as an action, as process and a goal (Bell, 2007).

8.8 Concluding Remarks

This study explored the teaching lives and social justice and equity practices of a group of teachers working within marginalised contexts. All these teachers believed that education and how it is carried out can provide learners with the means to reach full humanity and participation. In Chapter One I quoted extensively from Ayers et al. (2009) and Ladson-Billings (2009), wherein education was seen as a vehicle that has the ability to provide learners with the means to achieve full humanity, but that for some learners and teachers, it is indeed a fight. This is the fight that the teachers in my study took up. I showed how they struggled to achieve success, how they struggled to make sense of themselves personally, and professionally, and how they struggled to make a difference in the lives of the learners. Sometimes they were able to manage their teaching and their relationships with their learners in important and fulfilling ways, and at other times they were not.

But Ayers et al. (2009) remind us that democracy, social justice and equity are ideals that are never “quite finished” and that they must be “continually nourished, engaged and exercised” (p. 725). The teachers in this study make an attempt to continually nourish these ideals. They are aware that they are important in the lives of the learners, but that learners face oppression at almost every turn they make. Teachers continue to challenge this common enemy that they experience daily and the only way in which they can make a difference is to continue to try to educate their learners. They envision and work with hope for a better future, for “we don’t know really how to change the world, of course; we don’t know when our efforts are in vain – but we do know that change in small places can gesture towards larger transformation, and that changing a single mind can unleash a universe of possibilities” (Ayers, et al., p. 726). It is this belief and understanding that motivated the teachers to continue their practices of social justice and equity.

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Appendix1

Appendix 1: Permission to conduct research from the KZN Department of Education



kzn education

Department:
Education
KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

Tel: 033 341 8610

Ref.:2/4/8/236

Miss. Melannie Yvette Martin
38 Payn Street
Pietermaritzburg
3201

Dear Miss. Martin

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **Equity in South African Education : A Critical Exploration Of The Teaching Practices Of Teachers In KwaZulu-Natal**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The Period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 July 2012 to 31 December 2013.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Mr. Alwar at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Director-Resources Planning, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to the following Schools and Institutions:
 - 10.1 Henryville Primary School
 - 10.2 Umsilinga Primary School
 - 10.3 Slangspruit Primary School

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education

2012/07/20
Date

...dedicated to service and performance
beyond the call of duty.

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Appendix 2

Appendix 2: Ethical Clearance letter from the University of Kwa Zulu-Natal



24 June 2012

Ms Melanie Y Martin (872878379)
School of Education & Development

Dear Ms Martin

Protocol reference number: HSS/0434/012D

Project title: Equity in South African education: A critical exploration of the teaching practices of five teachers in KwaZulu-Natal

EXPEDITED APPROVAL

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process:

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully


.....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
/ms

cc Supervisors: Professor A Muthukrishna and Professor W Hugo

cc Academic Leader: Dr MN Davids

cc School Admin. Mr N Memela / Mrs S Naicker

Professor S Collings (Chair)
Humanities & Social SC Research Ethics Committee
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 3587/8350 Facsimile: +27 (0)31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za
Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

Inspiring Greatness



Appendix 3

Appendix 3: Letter of Consent for the Educator



**School of Education and
Development
Faculty of Education
Private Bag x01
Scottsville, 3201
Date:**

Dear Educator

As part of the research work for my PhD studies I am investigating the experiences and practices of teachers working towards equity for their learners. The title of my study is ‘*Equity in South African education: a critical exploration of the teaching practices of five teachers in Kwa-Zulu*

Through my research I would like to understand how teachers work towards providing equitable learning outcomes for learners. I have chosen you because the principal and subject advisor recognizes you as someone who works towards the best interests of your learners and that you try to ensure that your learners achieve quality education and equitable learning outcomes.

For this project I want to be able to:

- observe you as you teach the learners in the classroom. I also want to be able to videotape three of your lessons. It means that I will be present in your class for a period of about one and a half months.
- I also want to be able to observe you in interaction with learners and other members of your school community.
- Interview you at your convenience and in a location of your choosing for privacy purposes. The interviews are expected to last about two hours.

With your permission I will use this information to better understand what is taking place in the classroom, on the playground and the general schooling context.

I am a new lecturer at the University of Kwa Zulu-Natal. I have been an educator at public schools within the Kwa Zulu-Natal region for the past eighteen years. At present I am pursuing my PHD studies part time while lecturing at the University.

Prof A. Muthukrishna and Prof W. Hugo, senior lecturers in education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, are supervising the work.

To enable the research to be effective, we request that you assist us agreeing to being observed and interviewed.

Risks: There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study.

Privacy: All names and places will be changed to protect the child, the educator and the school's identity in the research report. Confidentiality and privacy is guaranteed.

Time involvement: The expected length of the interview is approximately two hours. You will be notified prior to the interview.

Payments: You will receive no payment for participation in this study.

Participant rights: You have the right to refuse to take part in this research. If you have read this letter and have decided to participate in this study, please understand that your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions and your rights will be upheld at all times. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of the project, you may contact, anonymously, if you wish, Prof. A. Muthukrishna.

If you are willing to participate in this research project please sign the consent form below and return to Melanie Martin.

I thank you for giving this matter your consideration.

Yours faithfully

Melanie Martin
Office Number: 033 260 6456
Cell number: 0836514564.
Email: _____

Professor A. Muthukrishna
Tel: 084 2459096
email: _____

CONSENT FORM FOR EDUCATORS

I..... (Write your full name) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of the letter that has also been explained to me. I have read and understood the nature of the research project. I willingly consent to participate in the research project.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at anytime, should I so desire.

I do understand that the only way I may benefit is through what this study can teach us about the experiences and practices of teachers who work towards equitable outcomes for learners.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 4

Appendix 4: Letter of Consent for the Principal



School of Education and
Development
Faculty of Education
Private Bag x01
Scottsville, 3201
Date:

Dear Principal

As part of the research work for my PhD studies I am investigating the experiences and practices of teachers working towards equity for their learners. The title of my study is ‘*Equity in South African education: a critical exploration of the teaching practices of five teachers in Kwa Zulu-Natal*

Through my research I would like to understand how your teacher/s works towards providing equitable learning outcomes for the learners in your school. In other words I want to find out how the teachers in your school help learners to achieve in school.

For this project I will be observing the teacher as she/he teaches the learners. Therefore I want to be able to be present at your school and in the classroom for a period of about one and a half months. I will also be videotaping 3 lessons of the teacher in practice with the learners in the classroom. The educator who is participating in the research will be interviewed in private sessions and I will observe him/her within the schooling context in general. With your permission I will use this information to better understand what is taking place in the classroom and on the playground.

I would appreciate it if you agree to allow your school i.e. the teacher and the learners to be part of the study. I am willing to discuss the project in greater detail should you desire to know more.

I am a new lecturer at the University of Kwa Zulu Natal. I have been an educator at public schools within the Kwa Zulu Natal region for the past eighteen years. At present I am pursuing my PHD studies part time while lecturing at the University.

Prof A. Muthukrishna and Prof W. Hugo, senior lecturers in education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, are supervising the work.

To enable the research to be effective, we request that you assist us by allowing your school to be part of the study.

Risks: There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study.

Privacy: All names and places will be changed to protect the child and the school's identity in the research report. Confidentiality and privacy is guaranteed. All photographs used in the research report will be edited to protect identities.

Time involvement: The expected length of the learner's and educator's interview is approximately one hour. You will be notified prior to the interviews.

Payments: Your learners and school will receive no payment for participation in this study.

Participant rights: You have the right to refuse to allow your school to be part in this research. If you have read this letter and have decided to allow your school to be part of this study, please understand that participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. The educators and learners who are to be interviewed or observed also have the right to withdraw from the study at any time or to refuse to answer particular questions and their rights will be upheld at all times. If you have any questions about you or your learners' or educators' rights as participants, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of the project, you may contact, anonymously, if you wish, Prof. A. Muthukrishna.

If you are willing to allow your school to be part of the research project please sign the consent form below and return to Melanie Martin

I thank you for giving this matter your consideration.

Yours faithfully

Melanie Martin
Office Number: 033 260 6456
Cell number: 0836514564.
Email:

Professor A. Muthukrishna
Tel: 084 2459096
email:

Professor W. Hugo
Tel: 033 260 5535
email:

=====

CONSENT FORM FOR PRINCIPAL

I..... (Write your full name) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of the letter that has also been explained to me. I have read and understood the nature of the research project. I willingly consent to allow my school to be part of this research project and for selected learners to participate in the research project.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

I do understand that the only way I may benefit is through what this study can teach us about what teachers can do when they work towards equitable outcomes for learners.

Appendix 5

Appendix 5: Permission from the school's Governing Body



**School of Education and
Development
Faculty of Education
Private Bag x01
Pietermaritzburg, 3201
Date:**

**The Chairperson
School Governing Body**

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to conduct research at your school for my PhD thesis. Below is a short explanation of what the research entails as well as my personal details. This explanation is necessarily brief but should you require further information I am willing to meet with you personally.

As part of the research work for my PhD studies I am investigating the experiences and practices of teachers working towards equity for their learners in your institution. The Title of my study is: "Equity in South African education: a critical exploration of the teaching practices of teachers in Kwa Zulu -Natal."

I chose your school because many teachers as well as the subject advisors recognize the work that the teachers in the school do. They have indicated that teachers at the school work towards serving the best interests of the learners in order to ensure that learners achieve quality education and equitable learning outcomes.

For this project I want to be able to:

- Observe the teachers as they teach in the classroom. I also want to be able to videotape three lessons. Videotaping will only occur once I have established a relationship with the teacher and the learner and after long observation.
- This means that I will be present in the school for about one and a half months.
- I want to be able to observe the teachers in interaction with learners and other members of the school community
- I will also want to interview teachers but this will be done in a location of their choosing and at a convenient time for them without impacting negatively on the schooling day.

Written permission will be sought from all learners, their parents or guardians, the principal and the educators selected to participate in the research project. Names and places will be changed to ensure that the school and participants remain anonymous. All those directly involved will be spoken to personally before they sign letters of informed consent.

If permission is denied by a parent then the face of the child will be concealed to protect their identities in all publications. Permission will also be sought from the teacher for the use of video material in publications.

I am a new lecturer at the University of Kwa Zulu Natal. I have been an educator at public schools within the Kwa Zulu Natal region for the past eighteen years. At present I am pursuing my PHD studies part time while lecturing at the University.

Prof A. Muthukrishna and Prof W. Hugo, senior lecturers in education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, are supervising the work.

To enable the research to be effective, we request that you assist us by allowing your school to be part of the study.

There are no financial rewards to your institution for participating in this research project. The only benefit is through what this study can teach us about what teachers can do when they work towards equitable outcomes for learners.

I trust that my letter will be favourably received. Please contact me should you require further information. You may also contact my main supervisor, Prof. A. Muthukrishna (031 2602494)

Yours faithfully

Melanie Martin
Office Number: 033 260 6456
Cell number: 0836514564.
Email: _____

Professor A. Muthukrishna
Tel: 084 2459096
email: _____

Professor W. Hugo
Tel: 033 260 5535
email: _____

=====

CONSENT FORM FOR GOVERNING BODY

I..... (Write your full name) the (Write your designation on the Governing Body) hereby confirm that the above letter was discussed at the governing body meeting on (Write the date of the meeting) and it was agreed that the school be part of this research project. I do understand that the only way my school may benefit is through what this study can teach us about what teachers can do when they work towards equitable outcomes for learners.

I have been designated by the governing body to sign this agreement.

Appendix 6

Appendix 6: Letter of consent for Parents/Guardians



School of Education and
Development
Faculty of Education
Private Bag x01
Scottsville, 3201
Date:

Dear Parents/Guardians

As part of the research work for my PhD studies I am investigating the experiences and practices of teachers working towards equity for their learners in a Grade Six classroom. The title of my study is *'Equity in South African education: a critical exploration of the teaching practices of teachers in Kwa-Zulu*

Through my research I would like to understand how your child's teacher works towards providing equitable learning outcomes for your child and his/her fellow classmates. In other words I want to find out how your child's teacher helps your child to achieve in school.

For this project I will be observing the teacher as she/he teaches your child. I will also be videotaping 3 lessons of the teacher in practice and your child will be part of the videotaped lesson. With your permission, I would like to be able to videotape your child as she/he interacts and communicate with the teacher during the lessons. I will therefore be able to better understand what is taking place in the classroom.

If you agree to allow your child/ward to be part of the study he/she will be videotaped and observed during the school day both in the classroom.

Prof A. Muthukrishna and Prof W. Hugo, senior lecturers in education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, are supervising the work.

To enable the research to be effective, we request that you assist us by allowing your child/ward to participate in the study by being interviewed.

Risks: There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study.

Privacy: All names and places will be changed to protect the child and the school's identity in the research report. Confidentiality and privacy is guaranteed.

Time involvement: The expected length of the observation will be over a week. You and your child/ward will be notified prior to the interview.

Payments: Your child/ward will receive no payment for participation in this study.

Participant rights: You have the right to refuse to allow your child/ward to take part in this research. If you have read this letter and have decided to allow your child/ward to participate in this study, please understand that he/her participation is voluntary and he/she has the right to withdraw consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. He/she has the right to refuse to answer particular questions and his/her rights will be upheld at all times. If you have any questions about your or your child/wards rights as a participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of the project, you may contact, anonymously, if you wish, Prof. A. Muthukrishna.

If you are willing to allow your child/ward to participate in this research project please sign the consent form below and return to Melanie Martin.

I thank you for giving this matter your consideration.

Yours faithfully

Melanie Martin
Office Number: 033 260 6456
Cell number: 0836514564.
Email: _____

Professor A. Muthukrishna
Tel: 084 2459096
email: _____

=====

CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

I..... (Write your full name) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of the letter that has also been explained to me. I have read and understood the nature of the research project. I willingly give consent for my child/ward
..... (Print child's full name), to participate in the research project.

I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent for my child/ward's participation in the project at anytime, should I so desire.

I do understand that the only way I may benefit is through what this study can teach us about what teachers can do when they work towards equitable outcomes for learners.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

=====

Appendix 7

First Semi-structured Narrative Interview

PART A: MY STORY (narrative biography of the teacher) (Process/social/political effects)

Purpose: as a way of getting to know more about the teacher being interviewed and as a way of building a relationship with them. By getting teachers to speak about their biographies, it is my hope that they will feel more comfortable and open up dialogical spaces.

Me: Tell me about yourself? Who are you? Where were you born?

(Below are also possible probe questions).

T: The location, the place; it was in Pietermaritzburg. I grew up here in PMB. No, I was born in the hospital, but I stayed near Mfundu; I lived near Howick. It was nice and enjoyable. My parents were both married, so we were staying with them together but my mother is now deceased. Three sisters and three brothers, so it's a big family. I don't have a family of my own. I live now in Scottsville. I do (live with dad) on weekends, just for working; it's near.

Me: Why did you become a teacher? Was it your dream job? Who or what has been your greatest inspiration to become a teacher? Was it a positive influence or a negative one?

T: Mm, it was just an opening that came up. I did not have enough guidance in terms of career choices. It was one of the available courses for me after I wanted to drop out of from agriculture so, it was a short cut. A short cut to finishing a degree and getting a job. Not necessarily, it was to complete my studies and thereafter get a job, so the job was not the main thing. That's what I applied for and that was the only option I looked at and I found it suitable. Out of all the careers I can remember, my schooling career; I can remember my schooling. At school we didn't have such a thing, that's why when I went to university; we had nothing. There was no guidance.

Me: So there was no inspirational teacher, someone who you looked to?

T: No, although I had some good teachers, I never ever thought of becoming a teacher. Well, I wouldn't say incidental because it was something that I thought through. I gave myself time to think about it so, ja, although it was not the first option that I would go to.

Me: Did you think you would be happy in teaching when you were making this decision? Was teaching different to any other profession that you thought about?

T: Ja, I think it is just the communication with the people; with the, the learners everybody inclusive of the staff, because we interact a lot. Ja, well, it depends on what aspect you are looking at. I haven't been into other professions, so I don't have such sound knowledge about them, but what can I say about teaching. Ahem, I find that teaching has a lot of responsibility. In terms of how you conduct yourself and what you do in the class outside, in the class, in the home, outside. It is one thing that I found it is continual. I don't say: 'oh now I am at home', but it still forms part of what you doing at home. Like preparation, you would not be able to prepare for work, at work all the time. You may find that you have meetings, at times you have staff development workshops. We are busy with other things, so you can't really. You know, can't settle down.

Me: So where does the responsibility come from? From the learners, the principal, the school, the community, who?

T: No! No! No! From just from virtue of being a teacher so I think, well, that is just for me. Some people may be able to complete it in. So, I found that I am unable to complete it in, so I finish it at home.

Me: Tell me about your teacher training?

T: Ja, I feel that I was adequately trained by the university and all the skills were taught. My subject specialisation was Maths, Natural Sciences, and Technology.

PART B: KNOWING THE CONTEXT (skills, personal development/economic and social realities)

The purpose of these questions is to understand the schooling context and the impact this has on who the teacher is and what the teacher can do or does.

Tell me about your school context? (Below are the possible probe questions).

Me: How long have you worked in your school

T: Since 2009, three years now; came straight from varsity here. I was trained for high school. I did my practicals here; in this school, and so apparently they were very happy with some of the things I introduced, so they had a vacation, am I saying a right word?

Me: Holidays?

T: No, not holidays, there was a post here.

Me: Vacancy?

T: Ja, and so this other lady was, she was off because she was going to have a baby, so they needed somebody temporarily for three months, so actually the principal called me and they wanted to find out how's the timetable at the university because I was only almost finished in any case. Then I said: 'Ja, I am attending but not so much', and then she asked me to come and we discussed, and it seemed it will be fine until I finished; and here I am permanent.

Me: Can you see yourself leaving teaching for another career?

T: Yes. As I have said I find that teaching has a lot of responsibility and I personally don't see it benefitting me so much in terms of growing, in terms of widespread knowledge. I feel that I am becoming more and more specialised in terms of knowledge so, and of course I want to explore others, other industries and not being confined to the department of education, but within the education field (shrugs) no, no, not necessarily.

Me: Do you enjoy teaching? Why?

T: Not really, not really, I don't really enjoy it so much. I feel that it is a lot of responsibility and also I don't get so much fulfilment at the end of the day in terms of how I have grown. Of course, I do accomplish a whole lot of good things in the class, and the school as a whole, but I just feel within me, it is just not what I really want and where I want to be at in the future.

Me: So even though you feel like this about teaching – so you still feel that you are a good teacher?

T: Yes. Because I do exactly what is required in terms of the expectations from the Department of Education, by the school, and of course, of by virtue of being a teacher.

Me: What are those expectations?

T: Teaching, class in time, and delivering the lessons, preparing before you go to class, giving learners adequate work, taking care of the different learning abilities, and being very careful with the background of the learners. Because I found that with this group there is such a difference in terms of some learners come from as far as Lesotho, the Eastern Cape, some are local, some are orphans; all of these kinds of challenges. So I feel that I am doing my best in taking care of such things, and I comply with the expectations of the schools such as, attending morning sessions all the time, taking responsibility without having to be called by duty, extra mural activities, and I believe that I am allowing learners to grow as much as they can when they are in my lessons and in my presence. So, ja and I feel, and also I think that I am shepherding them in the right direction to be good and effective citizens because generally and I am a Maths teacher but I am not always on the board, talking one plus one. Sometimes you find that I spend maybe, five or ten minutes of the lessons just generally, just talking generally. Sometimes I will give them pieces of paper and ask them to write anything

what they would like to. Don't write your name, but just tell me anything, say anything, and that is where you have and you find that these people are really going through things as young as they are. Then I am able to interact with them more. Although you are not able to say, but sort of give some guidance you know and all that, in terms of resulting from what you learn there.

Me: So you knowing about the learner, does it change the way in which you relate to them?

T: Oh yes, really it does, it does. You know when you find that when someone is experiencing a particular problem then you think of the behaviour. Okay, you will never know which person it is, and I think that is good for me not to know exactly, maybe, perhaps then you tend to be you know. So, when I know, then I know I know, and I am very careful about choosing such words in terms of conduct. I always try and make sure there is some kind of support within the class.

Me: By support do you means not only for yourself as a teacher but maybe as a counsellor/friend?

T: Yes, and somebody whom whichever the person is can be approached and talked to.

Me: Does knowing the child's background impact on your teaching of Maths?

T: You know exactly what to expect. Say for instance if a learners is staying at home and they got a shebeen at home. You will not expect that learner to be always up to date with their homework because there is music playing 24 hours, there is beating, and all that. So really, then you know that you have to try otherwise to make sure and try other things that the learners complete that work because such things are not just a make - up story. These things happen.

Me: What are some of the major challenges that you face in the school?

T: Ahem, I think there it is space limitation because what I find is that if there is so much of space, and there are plants and flowers, you are just able to take a walk. You think, you reflect, you are just able to, you know, walk around observe the kids. But here, they are just so cramped together that you are not even able to notice a learner, because I think just by walking and observing you are able to pick up that this learner is so and so, and this. I think in an open space you are really able to interact. In terms of sport; learners are not able to participate because you see this ground is so dangerous (pointing to the muddy, rough ground that is also used as a church car park), the ground here is very poor. So such things, so ja, I would say mainly it is the space limitations. Well, I would say but that is not the main concern because I find that we fall short of some resources because I remember when I

wanted to introduce a lesson for drawing for angles, I went with my own money, I bought the OHP transparencies then pens. The school had an OHP but it is broken. I actually approached my friend for his that he uses at work. He is not a teacher but that was not successful, so I was not able to deliver the lesson as absolute as I wanted to now. So in that manner, I feel learners were deprived of knowledge but really I would not say that resources is a setback but somehow it has an effect on it.

Me: Challenges in terms of teachers?

T: No, in terms of interactions is good, very good. It is 100%, I would say. Human relations? Here I am happy with everybody. I communicate well with everybody, and they also and other than me, I think that this is one of the schools where there is so much of transparency, love, joy and the mission and everyone's mission here is based on learning. Ja, so much based on learning because we find that people go an extra mile to help the learner.

Me: Do you get support from management, colleagues when you need it

T: Ja, all the time whenever you need support you get it.

Me: What are some of the experiences of being a teacher in this school?

T: Experiences? I think I have grown in a way because being the youngest teacher in this school I have learned a lot of things just by observing the experienced teachers I have observed. I have had the privilege of being seated in their class when they are teaching and also the workshops but also I find that sometimes when there is not so many of people in the same age range then somehow you it is not easy to relate to an older person. But in terms of work, then I think it is 100% privilege for me. But when it comes to social I find the bulk of the teachers are female and I am a male. So in a way, some people we are just a group of three, during break and if they are absent then it is just you so there is not sure much of interaction you know.

Me: What role do you play in the furthering of Maths in the school?

T: Furthering Maths, promoting maths, in other words arousing Maths in the school as well. Now, you see we as educators after every year we meet, we discuss the things we are going to teach, we share some ideas at the level of the teachers now and which- ever area someone has challenges then we discuss and resolve these things. As Maths teachers, and a team of Maths teachers we always encourage each other - how far are you with your assessments, how many have you done now, how was it, share with me the assignment you had, let me give it to my learners let me see how they are doing and all that? But really there has been nothing that major but it is just the communication – it is just more communication based in terms of interaction in terms of the teachers.

Me: What responsibilities and duties do you have?

I am class teacher first of all, I am a member of about three committees in the environmental committee, I am not the convenor but in the committee there is the aspect of 'Collect a Can'. You see, I was giving the cell phone in the morning. In terms of the prayer, I am the one who organises who is going to give the word today. Tuesday devotions, and it is more than ten (teachers) if the attendance is good.

Me: Are your decisions/opinions/etc. supported in the school?

T: Ja, as it said in terms of work related, no, everything is 100%. You get all the support. I don't know if you were here in the morning for the meeting. We are able to raise some things and they are taken note of although they are not discussed there, and then because the briefing has to be short so that teachers can be dispersed into the classrooms, so, yes.

Me: So even if you raise your concern at the meeting; when does it get discussed?

T: It depends on the seriousness of the issue, really. An urgent meeting might be called but generally our meeting starts at 2 o'clock so there is not so much of disturbance, or it might just be the individuals concerned in terms of maybe if has something to do with a particular committee to make sure that it does not disturb the whole school, so you just go and sit there and there is no need to be there.

Me: So as convenor of a particular committee, do members respect the decisions you make as a convenor?

T: Yes, even the principal does, the SMT, everybody in terms of age that they really don't consider, I was talking more social. For example, there is a new cell phone out, I would not go to one of the ladies and just you know talk about the new cell phone. I was talking more on a social side but when it comes to the academic side, oh, we mix very well.

Me: How involved are you in deciding on things like curriculum, resources, job requirements, policy etc.?

T: Well, I have been teaching Maths and as I said we interact a lot as Maths teachers, and I am involved as much as I want to in terms of meeting. Resources mmm, we are really restricted in terms of resources because the department sends the booklet. There are is no OHP, so really if I want to buy it, I can't because I am restricted by what is there. So if I have textbooks, why would I want more textbooks? So, you know, it is one of the things.

Me: So if the department does not provide you with these things like the OHP or the smart board, can the school not provide it? Can you not go to the finance committee and ask for it?

T: Well, not so easy because learners are not paying school fees, so income is not being generated at the school, except the R2.00 that the learners pay for these certain occasions, and also when there is an excursion, a percentage comes into the school. So, that is how we raise some funds. So it is not something that we can do that is so huge. It is just the money that we use so wisely and sparingly. It just like the last week, the photocopy machine broke and so, we can't just stay without the photocopying machine. So such money is reserved for such things that can really put a hold on things, so I wouldn't really say we can just buy things I need as a Maths teacher.

Me: How do you feel after a day at school?

T: The feeling is different on any given day. In terms of satisfaction, in terms of the duty, because I know that I have done that which is required and expected, then I am happy but as in terms of personal growth and personal interest, I am not so happy but the activities that take place in the school, I am very happy with so at times it covers the whole range.

Me: So even though you don't feel pleasure in your job you still give of your best. Why do you still give off your best?

T: I believe it is all about justice that has to be done to the learners because really I don't just see them as 14 year olds, I see them sitting in those big offices, I see them being Ministers, Presidents, being people who are leading the country, and the world at large. So, I want to see that the very little opportunity that I have, I make an impact that would help them not only to sustain them, but to go a long way to such an extent that even they were to interact with other people who would come after generations, they are able to give their best.

PART C: THE VALUE OF KNOWING

This part is meant to discover what learners mean to teachers and what teachers are prepared to do in their work towards equity

What are your values and beliefs about learners, education and learning? (Below are the possible probe questions).

Me: How do you feel about the learners in your class?

T: I think more than being a figure of a teacher, I am a teacher, but I think that I am more of a person that they can relate very well with. It's something that I have dwelt in but then I thought maybe it could also be age wise some of them are able to relate very easily. There was a case last year, if not the year before, a certain learner was able to approach me with an issue that was very serious. She actually asked me not to interact with the other educators in terms of it, but due to the seriousness of the thing, I was able to interact with those people

who are identified by the school to be in charge of such things. I found it is too much, and something has to be done about it. It's more of interaction. Within a lesson, I sometimes just take a seat next to a particular somebody, you know, just to find out what they do. I always have one on one interviews now and then, more especially, with those learners who are not doing so well. You want to find out what could be the cause and even with those that are doing well. You want to share the ideas. Some of them fluctuate; their performance fluctuates, then that raises interest. Then you will find, oh within that thing something happened, and then you can see the trend. Most of the time, I do a lot of marking and checking. When I have given an exercise then I would move around; keep checking, keep checking. You know that this person has been doing so well and now something is wrong. That is a question of discussion. I will go back and review the delivery of my lesson but also I compare, I have a lot of assessment that is not formal and my notebook where I record incidents. Last time there was this one learner that was so interested in wrong stuff, drugs, and all that. I was able to follow up his story and I found out that the actual root cause of it was at home, they had so much of trouble at home. He decided to go to his friends, and his friends were older than him and they were involved in these things. It is just a pity that sometimes you can go just so far.

Me: Do your learners know the value of education, who has taught them this?

T: Well, not as much as I would like to be but least I keep reminding them. They learn about it in school, most of these learners, they have got nobody at home. It is either a sister who is working night shift whom they get to see only at the weekend, because they work in the night. They wake up 4 o'clock in the morning, most of them. Last year, I had this boy who we had a close relationship with him, he was just one of those learners who are just so clingy, but then you understand the background. He was staying by himself in these RDP houses. His mother and father passed away, and so he just lived on the food given by the people, of which I am part, so other than that he went to bed without anything. So then you would see that nobody is there to motivate him; 'have you done your homework? have you washed your socks? have you ironed?', so it has to be done here school. Although some of them have the privilege of educated persons, or even though not educated, are very much interested in learning. They attend meetings and come and ask for clarity in certain areas. But generally speaking, these learners don't have caretakers at home.

Me: And this learner that you were helping, are you still helping him now?

T: Yes, we still have communication. Actually, some of the communication can get really complicated. There is a very good high school near here, I actually wanted him to go there, I

was prepared to pay his school fees, and all that. But when I found out, I wrote a letter to his..., I don't know whether it is a neighbour who has been taking a bit of care of him at times not always, but apparently she declined it, she did not like it. So he is in just one of the high schools, so really at times you can go so far.

Me: How do you show learners that you like them/care about you?

T: By talking with them, interacting, and I share a lot of experiences with them just so that they know because they really coming from very poor backgrounds, because some of them say: 'oh educators, they come in nice cars, they stay in good places'. So really, then it calls for one to come down to their level and explain I am just like you, and I was once like you. Sharing and communicating, talking more and more, it makes them break out and they are able to communicate with you. I go out of my way to help them a lot.

Me: So you think that sharing your experiences helps?

T: It does really, because sometimes when you are sharing something with them. You see that some of them are deeply touched, then some of them, maybe later on, after school or during break, they will come and ask further questions. At least one person learned from this and you are able to channel them.

Me: Tell me how does the environment affect the lives of the learners?

T: It is by communication firstly, it is observation because really in my experience, it is very easy to spot out someone who is busy or experiencing something with something. Generally with these learners, they are so energetic, they are so busy, then you see them withdrawing from things, performance in class, behaviour, then such things raise interests and you want to sit with them.

Me: Can you say in this class here, you know about most of the learners' backgrounds, their parents, whether parents are working, how many parents there are?

T: With the information, we are required to collect for the department we have this. The registers have information about orphans then you know generally they have got so much learners have parents and so much don't have. You know generally then you know that your lesson has to be channelled from a parent - teacher perspective. Really

Me: So you see your role as a parent then?

T: Big time. I would say that I really deliver my lessons from the role of a parent although, it is a challenge for me because I have never had a child, but then I understand some of the things because I have had the privilege of doing psychology at the university. I think that has also helped a lot.

Me: What are some of disadvantages that your learners experience?

T: I would say some of them, it is communication. Some of them come from as far as Lesotho. They don't understand English nor isiZulu. You will find that a learner in Grade Seven has to attend some of the classes with the Grade ones and twos, and teachers are really prepared to go the that extra mile to do that. I think they experience challenges. And I think hunger is one of the problems; but that is outside the school, but they come to school hungry.

Me: So you are saying that some of the problems in the community effect or impact on what happens in the school?

T: Yes, hunger and corruption.

Me: What do you mean by corruption?

T: There are some cases where you find that learners have been abused at home. I would say abuse, more than corruption; it is abuse and poverty. Some of them, you know, we go for educational excursions and it is not all of them who are able to go. It is because they are not working at home.

Me: So what do you do as a teacher when you find that a learner cannot go on excursion because of this?

T: You are able to do something but sometimes you are not able to do something. I remember last year, Mr. Ngubane was able to pay for this one boy, and he bought the clothes for him. So he was able to go to the Grade Seven farewell. At times, you are able to do something.

Me: So does the school have a fund to help learners do that?

T: Actually, the school does contribute towards it but as I said, the school does not have so much of money.

Me: Do you use corporal punishment in your classroom, why/why not?

T: Yes, at times, I found that it helps me. And it helps them too in a way that, you know when you interact more with the parents, in the parents meeting and all, that you find when you are one on one with the parent about the learner then you understand more about what is happening at home. When you explain to the parents, it is the total opposite of what the parent knows about his or her child. Yes, and you find that one of the things is that the parents are very, very strict. If they are naughty, they are getting punishment. So, when they are in the school, now knowing that they are not going to get a punishment, they are not going to get punished. Then they are more relaxed and they are able to do just what they want to do. Now when they know that, but when they know that we have the permission from the parents as well. The parent is doing so much on their side and we are doing so much on our side. And really, it is helping but I would say it is more of channelled into love and

discipline, more than really severe punishment because as you have seen, I don't use it so much. But when I use it, they are reminded that they are here to study and here to love.

Me: Do you see injustice happening in your school/community/in your classroom? Who does it? What do you do about it?

T: I don't know if I am going to answer correctly, but ja, I think we as a school are very disadvantaged. You see, there is a dam there. We have got no stuff because in class, you are not able to work 100%. As you can see, we are conducting this interview in the class just because there is no space. There are about six classes where teachers cannot get into the classes so there can be no effective teaching and learning going through there. You cannot say that the teacher must be there by themselves, where must the others go? Stand in the rain? So I feel that there is some kind of injustice. Yes, at times it is very painful when you have given your best, you give the learners homework and you find that many of them have not done the homework, so I feel that is not justice for me. But when you go a bit extra, you realise that that this is just one of those things but then you know we always try and meet half way because we have designed from 2 o'clock to 2:30, now they are not leaving with the other children. They are getting time to do their homework.

Me: What are the supportive factors in children's lives at home, school, and community?

T: Ja, very much especially the female staff, we really support the learners, they really go the extra mile. They communicate with them a lot. Not only female staff, male staff; even they are able to communicate with the learners. They are able to help them financially, spiritually, anyhow. They do get support lot of it. Maybe about 30%, the uniform, we get by asking donors and all that. There is this, don't know if you know this organisation Jameel Abdul or something but it is a Muslim society of some sort. Every year, before winter, they come with blankets and we are able to donate blankets. We identify within the class. Because now I know my class so well that this one is experiencing so much, so much and there is so much of openness even in the class. I am not ashamed of saying: 'Whom shall we give the blanket to?' The learners will actually say: 'let's give it to so- it is this one and so', and they would not be offended by it because they know I interact so much with them that being so or not having something is not your fault and nothing is wrong with them. Accept that you don't have so much or enough but then channel your mind in the right direction. So, it is not wrong. The food that they eat in the kitchen, sometimes you feel mmm, but just to show them that there is nothing wrong with it, I sometimes just send them and say: 'go to the kitchen and get

me some food'. Those five spoons, they make a difference to them, so just, it is more of showing them that this is just life and there is nothing wrong or strange.

Me: Do children have a fair chance of succeeding in your class, in the school? Why/Why not?

T: Yes, I would say from what I do in the class and yes, I would say yes they do. We work hard together.

Me: How do you do that? Do you learn from them?

I give them a chance to get to the board, I find that just as they do mistakes, I do mistakes as well and I find it is much fulfilling when you accept the mistake for them because then they notice that such things happen and I think it removes this picture of them knowing the teacher is a know it all, a Mr Perfect One, then I think it helps them not only in terms of Mathematics. I think it helps them generally to know that a person might just be there but it doesn't mean that they have everything. They might be going through something, also you know so as they make mistakes, I also make mistakes and all that. Yeah, I find that I learn a lot from them. Just besides the Maths that is done there, when you get to see them commenting on some of the things then you see the manner in which they conduct themselves. Ja, and I found that it is a very nice way of encouraging them to do something because you may find that when somebody goes there and they have done something and everybody is laughing at them. Then I am able to find something good about what they have done, even if it is the handwriting. For example, saying: 'Oh, your handwriting is very good but let's just correct this'. So, I am able to make sure that even though they have not done what is required but at least there is something good about it. So I think it would help them much more if they see that there is something about them, at least something good about them, because of the background, like I said so what they want to hear is that they are good and I believe that part of my job, not really job, but part of what I am required to do is to make them realise that they can be better than what they think they can really be.

Me: Do what learners say about you as an educator, as a person cause you to change the way in which you do things in the classroom, or in your behaviour towards them?

T: I have had such experiences and they have made me very happy and I have learned a lot from them. Some of them were really, I wouldn't say negative but I took them positively. In as much as I don't know what their intention was, but I took it positively. Some of them have been very positive. For example, this one learner said that you don't smile (laughs). And so that was just one of those things and think about it, and I really know in terms of the educators here, my colleagues, they are able to make them laugh and get them all excited and

all that But then there you get an opportunity to teach them more I say: ‘Okay that’s fine, you are different, I am different, you have to accept the fact that I don’t smile that much. It’s not because I don’t love you but our personalities are different. So ja, that’s fine’. That’s why you find that when someone is cracking out a joke, I give them that moment but just to make sure that it does not take up a whole lessons because now they always want to be. So, if I can’t do, someone else in the class can do it; so why not allow someone else to do it.

Me: If children fail a test, who do you think is responsible for this? Why?

T: Both of us; it is me and the learner. Parents, I would say to a certain extent but really I don’t consider that so much because the bulk of our learners don’t have parents. So I think it is really the learner and the teacher. The first thing that I do is ask the learner why they think they have failed and when it comes to you. Then I would really look, and sometimes I would really revisit the way in which I have been delivering those lessons and then I look at myself, what could have been in my life personally, without being here and see if this could have had an effect and if I really see that it has been on my side, then I am able to give them a chance to actually redo it. As you can see with that group of learners, it was those that were busy with the cultural show. I was talking to them, I think it was Tuesday, it is so good and so nice to participate in all of these things. But they must remember the main important thing is for them to learn here, pass, and move on. So I don’t want them to see that participating in that cultural show and culture as being a disadvantage now. So, I think it helps me a lot so I tend to focus it more on myself than on them because I think it opens up for me for development.

Me: What do you do if you feel that another teacher/management/principal etc. have done something that you feel will not benefit the learner or marginalises a learner in any way? Have you ever experienced a teacher marginalises a learner in your class?

T: Not so much where they do it deliberately on the learners but more of teacher conversation; when they talk so and so is like this and that, and that and that. They don’t do it in front of the kids. I haven’t heard much of that but I think some of the cases have not been so severe. You have some of the teachers who will say: ‘You are not doing your work you are going to fail if you are not doing work’. I think that is not marginalising, that is just making them wake up. It is not only helping them but also helping others. Because I think that is when we are talking. When I listen to a teacher saying something about a learner, they are totally different in my class so then I am able to say but for me, this is how I see this person.

PART D: MY EXPERTISE - TEACHING OF MATHS/SUBJECT

To find out whether teaching practice enables effective learning

Tell me about you the mathematics teacher. (Below are the possible probe questions).

Describe how you feel about teaching mathematics? Why?

T: I think Maths is one of the subjects where you don't get so much of discovery. I just think you don't get so much of discovery.

Me: How do you mean discovery?

T: You know, it is unlike, for instance, I used to teach Natural Science when I first came here, and there we would do things with the learners. Take a trip, walk to the river, and they would ask questions and they interact but with Maths, it is more of fact, not really fact but it is just like that. If it is not negative one then you can't have another answer, but you know with other learning areas, people are able to support their statement and all that so Maths is more (punches table – to indicate Maths is more precise, confined).

Me: So you feel that the Maths that we learn in school is different to the outside world?

T: Ja, but there things that you find that are common and useful.

Me: Are you able to bring the outside world into the classroom?

T: Oh yes, for instance, we have just had a recent census and it was so fortunate that I was doing statistics at the time, I made them the practical lesson. We went out there and they were counting the different cars going out, they came to class and they drew the graphs and all that and then I asked them : 'now what can we do with these graphs?', and then they said that we know that in this area most people prefer this type of car. Then I explained that the government will do the very same thing with this census, they will say that in this area so much of household so when they are planning in terms of service delivery, they can use this information that they have collected. There is a lot that you can connect with the outside world

Me: Do you think your knowledge of teaching has it developed over the years?

T: Ja, here I think here you really get the reality because ideally the class that one would get at university is just a little class of all the learners where they are all doing so well and really disciplined and all that. But some of them, you really have to teach them what is discipline firstly but when you are at university, you think that they would be so much disciplined, so there, so ja, I think it is quite correct it is more learning here, more practical here and it is far more challenging; very, very challenging.

Me: What people, incidents, experiences have been influential in shaping the way you think about your practice?

T: Ja, we have had a few Maths workshops, we have interacted and seen the approach that they are using and it has really helped. We get to observe a few lessons of an educator then we point out some good points that they make or the way in which they conduct themselves during the delivery of the lesson, so you really want to utilise that teacher.

Me: Are you always prepared for the day?

T: Yes, I would say yes, I always know what to do. I always know what to do, if I have been able to plan the day before but I am always able to do that in the morning, I actually know what to teach.

Me: When do you prepare your work for the day?

T: Usually it is at home and Friday because Fridays is the day that I dedicate to this. I may collect some learners' book, just collect the exercise books but really.

Me: What are some of the things you think of when preparing a lesson for your learners?

T: Mainly it is based on the syllabus. Firstly, what has to be taught to them then I look for similarities that I can relate within the community and with themselves.

Me: What do you experience as barriers to achieving your teaching goals?

T: Ahem, the number of the learners is big. I feel that one is not able to give the necessary and required attention to each and every individual in the class. At times you cannot spot that this one has not understood this, and that one has not understood that.

Me: How do you monitor your students' progress in learning mathematics?

T: Firstly, I have workbook that I am using, I've got a classwork book and a homework book. I make take a particular group's books and look at them, and look at the information and all that then I would write some notes on it and see what it is really that they are really struggling with, and then I would come with it and talk to them about that area. I then find that maybe, it is not just this group that doesn't understand and maybe it is half the class. Then I am able to revisit it and maybe do it again and maybe give extra exercises, more examples on that and reteach it.

Me: So then you are able to say that okay for today just based on either the classwork, the homework or even a test that you have given them that you are able to say that the children know this, this and this ?

T: Ja, for instance in the last assignment, I gave them a chance to actually mark their work although I wouldn't have given them their work because they would change the answers and all that. I have given them for instance if it is Grade SevenC, I have given them Grade SevenA papers to mark just so that they are able to spot out the mistakes that one can make

and they are able to learn from it, assess each other. But I checked at the end to see if they have marked properly and that it is all okay before I record the marks.

Me: How do you take into account the individual needs of your learners?

T: That's a difficult one, you talk to the prefects. That is a very difficult one for me, because you have got the syllabus and you don't want to be left behind only to find that you have not covered the whole thing and you have not covered what is required. But at the same time during the time as I said, I do a lot of walking around and I am able to spot it there and then, and then I am able to explain to them further within the class. If I see that they are really struggling, although I don't do it individually, I give them more practice and so even those that are not struggling, I give them more and more practice. But to say that I do it individually not individually, no, because of the numbers.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) (Below are the possible probe questions).

Me: Is there any particular strand or topic in the mathematics curriculum that is quite difficult to understand or difficult to teach? Explain why.

T: Ja, there is, I found the long division difficult to teach. What I have noticed is that some of these learners, their background in Maths has been so much based on fact. I remember this one day, I was teaching them about how you get the formulae to calculate the area of a triangle, and I was just explaining it. I drew rectangle and then I drew a line through it and then I asked them what know do you notice? They said two triangles, so in other words if you know the area of a rectangle, you can just divide that by two and you have the area of one triangle. I found it is more difficult for them to understand the process, more than to just memorise the fact which is divide by two. That also required a lot of time because then you have to unpack and unpack and then you can see that they really don't understand and you have to go back and that takes a lot of time. The approach in which Mathematics was taught to me at university is so much based on process, much more than just the final thing, the fact. I, that is what I do here but that also takes a lot of time I'm telling you it takes a lot of time.

Me: So you know, and you recognise that it takes so much of time. Have you ever gone to another teacher and said you know, I am having a problem with this division, is there a way in which I can get learners to understand this?

T: Ja, we do interact it is just that, long division is here, more here in Grade Seven. They do it in other classes but it is more here in Grade Seven, but it is more. It gets more complex here, I am able to teach it and some of them get it, but you know sometimes you want to deliver it in a certain way and you expect much but then you only get back that much. So,

you figure it out. Ja, but also I use them; the learners. If I feel that maybe I have not been able to explain the concept so much then I would say so and so, go next to so and so and explain. Maybe if I don't want to make other learners feel bad, that they are not so much bad and efficient. I say explain it to your neighbour. So maybe I will say for today, I am going to change seats, you sit there and so at the end of the day, I want you to explain to your neighbour. So I use them as well to explain to each other and I found that they can explain very well, perhaps better than I can sometimes.

Me: Is there any particular strand or topic in the Mathematics curriculum that you enjoy teaching? Explain why.

T: Ja, there are some I enjoy teaching. Integers; it is about numbers and getting them to know that.

Knowledge of Curriculum

Me: Tell me about the Maths curriculum? Are you able to understand all aspects of it?

T: Yes, when it comes to NCS, I focus more on the ultimate outcome because what I really found is that practically speaking, it is very difficult to go to each and every learner and say that this one has achieved, that one achieved, that one achieved that. I just read through them and get a picture but what I really focus on is the learning outcome.

Me: Are you able to select your materials to teach?

T: Yes, but maybe here it is just textbook and if it is other material, you have to be creative. You have to make it yourself or buy it yourself. It is not easy though.

Me: Are there challenges and limitations when it comes to selecting your materials to teach?

T: No, the department gives you the books to choose from, so I choose.

Me: What do you do when you do not have the required materials for your lesson?

T: You buy it yourself like I said. Sometimes you make it or you share from other classes, but like I said, it is not easy.

Me: What support do you have with respect to curriculum development?

T: A lot of it. From here especially.

Knowledge of Teaching

Me: Can you describe the best lesson you have given this year? And please explain why?

T: Ja, although I cannot remember what I was teaching but learners were really excited about it because I felt that they understood it. It was something that they did not know, so it came out as a surprise to them. What was I teaching? Oh yes, it was multiplication of you know, you say maybe 2×3 , and we did it in so many methods that they can use. I kept on saying yes, there another method, there is another method. I did two with them on the board and I asked them to try out themselves and do some more. Some of them were so able to do so quickly and they were excited about the discovery that they did.

Me; So if a learners is stuck and not able to do something what are some of the things you would say to make them understand ?

T: I start with where they are and then ask guiding questioning to get them to the answer. Remember I said, Maths is a process, so learners must understand the process, so I ask questions about that.

Me: Do you use any teaching styles/strategies or approaches to make your learning more relevant to the learner? If yes/no, please describe.

T: I would say that it is more learner centred and discovery, guess, and check.

Me: And do you find that the learners enjoy this?

T: Yes, I found that these learners lose concentration so quick. They talk a lot, so they said to us, I was with other colleagues, they said to us, this so and so you are like this and this and this. We just laughed and accepted it. But there is something that I pursued because the learner said you make us sleep. Then you see that you have to be versatile when it comes to things. You cannot just be on the board only, or you cannot just give them worksheet and then you just sit back. You give them worksheets, you do work on the board, and you get somebody on the board. So you have to be busy because they lose interest very quickly

Me: What assessment practices do you follow in your class?

T: In terms of feedback, I comment on their papers, even when I walk around, I give them feedback. I say, even on things not about Maths, like what a good handwriting or you must improve on your writing. Underline work, make sure work is neat, and do corrections, all that. I also do tests. I do pair work but not so much with Maths because I found that the group can get 100%, only to find that someone understands nothing. So when it comes to assessment, I want it to be more individual especially the formal one, just so that I get a picture. But although I keep a record of group work and all that, when it comes to group work for Maths, I found it really needs proper planning as well because you have to distribute them equally as well. And so on, you know.

PART E: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES

How teachers continue to work towards improving their practice and thus learning outcomes for students?

Tell me about professional development activities you have participated in? (Below are the possible probe questions).

Me: You have already indicated that you attend a lot of workshops, do you think you need more professional development and that it still needs to happen?

T: I think the syllabus that I am having here, Grade Seven, I think I have got enough. I am comfortable because with the Maths that I have, I can actually teach in the high school. One of the challenges that I have sometimes is stepping back to their level and that is also a challenge to me. I remember this one day, I actually had to go to this one educator and say really I don't understand how to explain this to them, please help me. I knew it, but I couldn't explain it to the learners, I am quite comfortable now. Although every year, it is important to have these meetings just to revive each other.

Me: So who would be the best person to do this; people in school, your own/networking etc.?

T: My own development.

M: What about departmental workshops?

T: I don't like departmental workshops because departmental workshops, really what they do there? For me they just tell me what I already do. So you go there, and you are told just what you do. So really I get really bored in the department workshops.

M: In terms of your union?

T: It has, I think once, since I have been teaching but I was not teaching Maths. When it comes, then the group of teachers who teach go. It is not every time that I know who is going for what. Union workshops and departmental workshop are the same. Unions are, they are not so much involved in terms of academic. The union is much more involved in the technical part of it. They can do a bit more and interact more, I don't get to let the unions know. Ahem, I have not taken the initiative to do that, but there are channels to do that but I just feel that I am comfortable with developing myself and going for the help whenever I need it to deliver to my learners.

PART F: UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT

To understand the socio-cultural context and how despite this teachers continue to work towards equity.

Tell me about support structures that impact your life in community? (Below are the possible probe questions).

Me: Do parents support you in the teaching of their children?

T: Yes, not all of them by virtue of being present at meetings; that means a lot, that means that they are interested. Some of them write in their communication books to explain why they have been absent, they explain if a learner has a problem, they come to school; some of them. So ja, you do get the support although they are not so much educated, they show this

Me: How does it make you feel?

T: It encourages me and also it keeps me on my toes as well because you get to see some parents are really interested in their work so the work has to be up to standard all the time, although I have it in me ,you know you always go the extra mile.

Me: Is it just for those learners who show the interest?

T: No, I do it for everyone because if I have to mark the exercise books, I do it for everyone

Me: Why do you think they help/don't help their children?

T: I think it is mostly because it would be harder for those that are illiterate to help them. Because you get such comments like: 'You must tell your teacher I am not educated, I don't know about all that'. Then, but we don't take it so seriously because we know.

Me: What opinions do you have of these parents?

T: I appreciate them a lot because I remember, I think it was last year, that other year, when I first came to the school, I cannot even remember. I actually asked after a week or so, I asked the parents to sign their learners' exercise books, then I think I was away sick, so the parent had signed, I think there was maybe three days' work that I had not marked. I had left work for them you see, and I could see that the parent has signed. So then you see that this parent is really consistent on this thing so when you come back you know that have to be up to date, you have to do your work, and you cannot just lay back as if it is fine to continue like that.

Me: What is your opinion of parents that don't help?

T: Well, I believe those who don't help, it is because they don't know how to. No, I don't think it is because they are not interested. Some of them, really it is because they have no parents at all so, for those parents it is because not so much motivated with learning because they believe that you have to be educated to assist somebody. But I believe that the SMT is doing their best because they are always motivating the parents just by encouraging, asking, taking the books and looking at them. It doesn't mean that you have to be able to understand everything; just by looking at the books, you know it helps. Ja, we get such good comments by the parents as well about the work that learners are doing some of them.

Me: And if you feel that they are parents that don't actually support the children what mechanism do you put in place so that they never ever struggle in the class?

T: Our system has been designed to such an extent that we give learners extra time, especially for homework because that is most important for us. So really, if a learner has not done homework, it is because they were busy playing, and that is why they get punishment because they are given time to actually do the homework and of course some of them, they do get time at home but they would not do the homework and that's evident with all the learners.

Me: So you feel that study time in the afternoon is a way of actually providing the support for parents?

T: Yes, also it is a challenge because some of these learners live on the food here in school so if you keep them from 2 o'clock to 2:30, and expect them to do everything there, it really is not practical. I can't do it, I cannot expect them to do it but then we push them because there is no way at home they will never do it so it is better here, try you know, ja.

Me: How do you feel about the children of these parents?

T: I feel bad because they can't help it and the parent can't help it. So you just keep trying.

Me: Are there any other support structures in the community that impact you, the teacher?

T: The ward councillor here is very supportive of the school. He is very, very supportive of the school. He has donated some things like uniforms, there is a pastor here who donates uniforms too, and the community here donates. A taxi owner here, every week, our learners go to the museum; different grades so he gives us discount for the learners. Ja, ja, more financially and you know, in terms of donations.

Thank you

After interview, and when the voice recorder was turned off, the teacher indicated that teaching was a real challenge and he expects a lot from himself. He felt that he was a shepherd for the learners and that he believed that his Christian background made him want to work hard and be committed for learners.

Appendix 8

Second Semi-Structured Interview

Re- interview questions – Evange

Me: What values do you have that influence your teaching and do you find it difficult to act according to your values?

T: I am a Minister; so aah, it all begins in the conscience. Whenever I am doing my lesson planning, doing all my programmes, all my planning, aah so, for me the first thing is that I do it with a clear conscience.

Me: What do you mean a clear conscience?

T: You know like, as in to say for me, what I plan is what should be done. So that is what I strive to do. So at my planning phase, I pray about it; so I find that for me it is very important that I fulfil what I put up front for myself, before me. So well, there are a number of circumstances that contribute to me not being able to do it.

Me: You said that there were a number, what other values?

T: It is the kids; to have the kids at heart, always, I always put them first. You know, I take them as though I am one of the feeders. You know, the teacher at the school have different capabilities, I regard myself as a particular nutrient as well. So if that particular learner or particular person comes into my class, and me having not gone that extra mile to get that nutrient and to ensure that it is quality, then for me it means that that child goes hungry for that particular period or particular day, so I always try to avoid such that. That is main for me, I need to have, and to make sure that I deliver it at the best, having a child in the class.

Me: And do you find it difficult to act according to your values?

T: No, not at all; I find that it is not always possible but I find that I enjoy it. The standards that I set for myself actually make it easier, for example, I find it easier when the papers come, you know, we write departmental papers that you just see for the first time and the learners see it. Then you just see I taught this well, I have done my best, and whatever happens is beyond my control now. So it gives me that, and also it gives me that happiness about that child because I find that I expose that child enough such that he/she is able to express themselves to their best. They are not disadvantaged in any manner; in terms of me now, not being able to teach in a particular way.

Me: So you are confident all the time that whatever is thrown at the child they are able to manage it?

T: Ja, but you know, there are cases you know. Like last year, I lost my grandma so I had to be at home for almost a week for preparations and all that stuff. So that, it impacted on me, you know, I always leave a week for revision. I always try to push sometimes even on weekends when I am not busy with my Ministry, I just try to push on the weekends. Just to make sure that I have enough time for revision, especially, first terms learners that have been on holiday and learners that have forgotten everything, almost everything. So you want to make sure that you have time to get them going, get them going, and get them going. But that was not the case; so when the papers came, I found that though I couldn't act to my values, I found that I could at least forgive myself, it was beyond my control.

Me: Curriculum policy says that we have to teach for social justice and equity? What does it mean to you and for your learners in the class?

T: You know, I find that for social equity and social justice, I find that for me it means being able to teach the learner to the best ability. Aah, bearing in mind that learners come from different backgrounds, different families, and so on, but you want to present and honest. Aah what, you know, an honest thing in front of the learners, and allow the learner to express/explore that things without you now being biased to any particular side of the story. So you want to present a true story and say here is a true story, let us deal with this, how do we deal with this? And I always want to engage them and allow them to also have their contribution so in that manner, I learn about their background as well.

Me: So are you saying then that in the way in which you do it, you try to cater for all the learners in your class?

T: Definitely, yes; I try to cater for every learner. Like now, I am a Grade 11 teacher, rather class teacher and I have 73 of them in my class. Now practically, it might not be easy to be to get each and every learners experience at its optimal level, but I always try to ensure that at least every learner gets a particular chance to voice out, and to share that experience with others. But even in the learning, I try to get to all the learners, it is not easy with the whole class but I try, I try, I try. You watch and you listen to the learners and see how I can help this one and this one, this one. Ja.

Me: Do you have a personal sense of accountability to learning and the learning outcomes for children who are poor like in your school?

T: At times I feel that I can't help all of them, but academically I set my own standards at the beginning of every term. Well, that is what we do in the school however, I always set my

own particular goals so I would say this is what I want to achieve, say take for example, maybe for this class, I want to achieve this percentage. But always it would be 100% because that is what I want, but if I get only 78 percent of them who made it, then I get a bit worried and then I focus much more on myself and think about how I can improve. Also, I allow myself that transition because also I have been in the primary school, now I am in the high school. At the high school, I would say the responsibility is greater for example, there I am teaching different grades. In the primary school, I was teaching one grade; same subject, so now I have to adjust and be up to date all the time.

Me: At Happyville, you were teaching Grade Seven and I am sure that there was a great deal of pressure and a great sense of accountability and responsibility because these were learners going into high school, so do you think it is the same now?

T: I would say yes, but I would say I feel the pressure greater now. Reason being, there I am taking Grades Nine, Ten, and 11. All these people, they write departmental papers always. At Happyville, the Departmental papers would come two times a term, sorry a year rather; these are annual papers and that is used as a benchmark. So I find that it was just one class or grade and I was able to the best confidence, say they were ready for the paper and they used to pass. Now there you have got to balance class of 78 of Maths, another 50 of Maths, another 73 of Maths, so it, the pressure is on now. I find it hard to balance sometimes but I just keep trying because it is many now, many.

Me: You know there is a great deal of research that suggests that schools today are not providing quality education to students especially the poorest in our society? What do you think about this? Do you think you/your school are providing your learners with access to quality education? How? Why?

T: I think we cannot run away from the fact that poor communities imply poor schools, in terms of resources and so on, and parents cannot afford; and if that is the case you talk about learners travelling miles and miles to school from home, to school, and then back again. So you always want to think about: 'how does that affect the learning of the child?' A learner that travels so many kilometres by, would be in a better state if he or she came with a car, because the energy – they are tired, they are stressed, and maybe they are scared – so all these things contribute to their stress. By the time they reach the school, you as a teacher, you are thinking they are fresh, and you expect them to be fresh, because it is morning, and yes, you expect them to be fresh, but it is not reality. They have been through a lot. However, I believe that, also given those obstacles, I believe that I, personally, I can find the time to actually do even more than just looking at the problem obstacle, and say: 'here is the problem'. So I, for

example, I give them more work, especially over the weekends, where they will not be travelling so much. and they are able to do as much as possible. But I will say. Really, it is a disadvantage. For example, at Happyville, it was better than compared to where I am now. Because there, they travel, they were poor, but they were just around the school. You know, even though the government is feeding the children, but then you think, for somebody who travel so many kilometres on an empty stomach, for that particular morning. They will be like really waiting for that break time, waiting for that meal. So, that is why I would say, ja, that contributes.

Me: Do you think that teacher quality also contributes to this poor education?

T: Definitely, yes; definitely, yes. I would say yes, teacher quality. I will give you an example: in my school, we are short of a Maths teacher for Grade 12. Ahem, it has been a week, and the learners have not been able to learn Maths. I'm teaching Maths Grade 11 down to Grade Nine. The question is now: 'do I move now, and teach the Grade 12? But what happens to these ones?' So I would say, in terms of teacher quality, because rather than not having a teacher at all, the principal would fall for, say (inverted commas) "anyone who is qualified" – academically, maybe not professionally – just because there is a gap, to at least fill the gap. Just because there is a shortage of teachers, especially since Maths and Science for FET. So, I would say, quality of the teachers also impact greatly, because, for instance, this I found for myself. Remember, I said at the beginning, the values that one puts up front also assisted big time. You find that there are sections that are easier, and I enjoy them, so then the temptation is to spend more time on those sections, as possible, but then the conscience would say: 'no, you have got to cover this'. So, I think quality, not only in terms of academically, but holistically as well.

Me: Did a school like Happyville provided for quality education?

T: Definitely, yes; just that there is a shortage of teachers that is the quality - beyond their control.

Me: Do you think that the role of a teacher is for the social and moral development of a learner or is it just educational development – give examples and explain why you are saying this?

T: All of them - because I believe that learners will not only end up being learners. They will become adults, parents and so on, so I believe that we cannot teach a boy manhood only when he is married; it begins here, at Grade say Eight, right now. For example: 'you are there to protect, this is your sister you must protect her'. If you are able to protect your sister, your family, female friends, classmates, or school friends, and not abuse them surely, maybe, later

on in life they will realise that it is their responsibility to protect women. So really, I believe that we have got to teach them as much as possible, holistically looking at what the whole picture. It is not only the parents who must teach that but us too. Sometimes, I find when I see a need because different classes differ so you would take three to five minutes talking to them something different. Yesterday I did it, and they were so shocked and I said to them what life is really? and they were having their Maths things ready, and now sir is talking about this and this and what is happening. But you find that they so interested in it and they appreciated because even during the break time they will come and ask me even more, and more and more But time will not allow for this practice fully but I believe I try – I have got to try because sometimes parents don't teach this – so you have got to try.

Me: Do you sometimes reflect on how you taught a lesson and not like what you have done? Why?

T: Ja, definitely; most of the time it will be a case that I did not get enough time to prep for that particular lesson. Ja, then you find that for instance, if take Grade Nine, if I start in Grade Nine A by time I reach Grade Nine B, I will realise that in Grade Nine A, I should have done that, I should have done better.

M: But why wouldn't you have prepared?

T: Not necessarily not prepared as such, but not prepared fully. Reason being, I find that there is a lot of administration that is done particularly, in high school. You do this particular assessment for e.g. if you are doing three assessment tasks, you have got to analyse each and every one of them. You have got to say what the improvement plan is and so on and so on. There is so much of work that needs to be done in terms of administration and really, we begin school at quarter to seven, actually half past seven up to three pm and by that time, one is really exhausted. The only time I use is the weekends and I sleep late very late.

Me: So how do you feel now knowing that you have gone into a class and you are not fully prepared?

T: Well, what helps me in particular is that I am confident in the subject that I teach and that even though I did not get enough time to prepare as such or to do all the sums before I get to class, but I know that one way or the other I will be able to do all of it.

Me: Is it because you feel you are confident in Maths and know all you need to know?

T: Ja, ja, like last year, I was teaching ah, they gave me a subject, Technology. Although I did Technology, I was not confident in teaching Technology so you will find me sitting and preparing for Grade Nine Technology and I would try out things before I get to class and also

the responsibility is greater now I have got a class where I didn't have a class before. There is register, there is high school learners getting pregnant, all these things or issues.

Policy

Me: How do you feel about the CAPS policy? (Have you read or engaged with the policy on curriculum? Do you know exactly what it says and how it can be used to further learning in your class? Does it allow you to reconstruct it so that all learners' needs are catered for? Do you use it in your assessment practice?)

T: I wouldn't say yes, but I have tried my best. But you know the Department has not done much or rather it has not done its best to equip the teachers with the transition. But for me, I find when I studied it myself, taking time, I realised that you know, that the content has not changed - just a few things here and there and I don't find it challenging.

Me: Do you follow it quite rigorously or do you change it to suit you - what?

T: I try to follow it as much as possible

Me: So say for example you have learners and there are certain things that they are supposed to know for example, integers but now the curriculum is saying you must teach integers but there is something that they need to know before that or that they don't quite know properly – what do you do?

T: I go back and that has been a challenge, and when you are submitting things to the HoD, they realise that you are a little behind in terms of the schedule and then you have to account. Especially for Maths, you can't do this section if they have not understand that – you will confuse them even further. So you have to know refresh on the previous one.

PRACTICE (My thinking is – they practice in particular ways – why?)

Me: Why do you teach Maths/English?

T: I find it fascinating; I find that Maths is not just formulae, I don't know. Maths, you can do a whole lot with Maths. There are amazing truths that one can discover for oneself. Ja, I suppose it is just my luck that Happyville gave me Maths and here I do Maths, also though I did Physics too and Life Science. So I just don't find Maths interesting; I find it fascinating, I like it when the learners get excited about certain theories and there is light, and everyone is just happy rather than you know, where you have to just follow the routines – this is a leaf, it is green okay and that's it. But for Maths, there are many fascinating things. Currently, I am doing a section in geometry and they are calculating angles and finding the size, and so on and so on and they find it very amazing that you could find one thing using maybe three

different methods and they will be amazed. They are just amazed that this one is using this method and they are correct, and this one another using another and it is also correct and they are amazed and asking how come? So they are just excited about this adventure.

Me. What is your understanding of a Maths learner? What skills and knowledge should a Maths learner have? (Why must they have these skills – do you ensure that your learners have these skills?)

T: For a Maths learner, it is somebody who is willing to discover new ideas; who is just determined to explore as much as possible to go beyond just the theory and say okay, this is the theorem of Pythagoras, this is what you do – rather know **why** and **what**. I like it when I get learners of such nature who ask such challenging questions. And really, I find it quite fascinating for myself when I have to stop and say maybe somebody asked a question and I say: ‘you know what I don’t have the answer right now, give me some time to think about it’. I just find it interesting and exciting for me when I sit back in my desk and do it and having to go back and explain to them and asking them what other ways could I have done it and what ways they have done it. I just find it challenging to me, and to them and therefore everybody is in the pool of learning -continuous learning. The one skill that they should have – maybe I can call it a skill ,but I find that just being motivated to learn new things, new ideas. I find that if a learner is motivated to learn, it makes it easier to learn. If they are motivated to learn, no matter how abstract, how difficult the thing may be for them but if they are willing to learn, they will try to come up with different ways to bring that a Math problem down and cut it into small pieces, and they are willing to question things. So for me rather than being able to do one plus one it is better for me to work with learners who are motivated – not just to learn one plus one but to go beyond that. So I find that the most important thing for me would be a motivated learner.

Me: What about general Maths skills like calculation – is this not important?

T: They are important, but rather not as important as being motivated. If a learner is motivated and they are not quite confident in things like, calculation and so on then that is particularly, my job to teach them, to give them that confidence.

Me. In the previous interview you indicated that caring for learners was extremely important. Do you think that caring for learners is enough to make them get the necessary skills and knowledge needed in Maths or in education?

T: No, (laughs) no; if we talk about caring then the topic is just wide, but if we talk about the physical care of seeing a learner in torn shoes. Maybe you will take R70 -00 and buy the shoes and so on, but that would in no way contribute to them knowing Maths but if you talk

about care; like feeding them, then giving them the necessary nutrients – that means for me, ensuring that you are in class, they are in class, they are safe they are learning and you are teaching. In that teaching learning is taking place. So I would categorise caring for them in two things and I always try to incorporate the two – so it is caring for the fact that they have good conceptual knowledge of Maths – good concepts, and then caring for them to but learning must take place and their wellbeing.

Me. You have good knowledge of Maths concepts – why do you think that this is important for a teacher to have? Why? (What do you think would happen to learners if they did not have access to this?)

T: Such that you produce somebody who has good knowledge of Mathematics. So you want to produce quality candidates because if the teacher is not quality obviously the product there would be even (shrugs – to show it is bad). I believe, that for me, that if I am 90% confident then I give my learners to be 100% confident. Why? Because I don't take them as not knowing. Why? Because they can also discover something that I have not discovered. But if I am 50% then learners maybe, will have a 60% at least chance of knowing it. So for me I really, believe that if I am confident in my subject like, Maths, then it will put learners in a better position a better perspective.

Me: What do you think your learners can produce?

T: Learners can work at any percent. But it differs. Today I was talking to them about constructing their study time table – three weeks before exam and I was telling them that they must also be realistic about themselves. They can't jump from I was telling them it would really take a lot for you to jump from 32% of Maths to 80% so set your target so really they are different. Some are able to grasp the content quicker. Some of them you write the sum on the board they have already got the answer. I encourage them to reach for the best possible for them

Me: If you as a teacher did not have good conceptual knowledge and you didn't think learners could achieve what would happen to learners?

T: Shame; it would be a shame, because those learners would be robbed - really. They would be disadvantaged, they would not know because they teacher does not know or care. If the teacher does not have that much background, we have got clusters, we have got HoD's. If they are really interested in the learners, then they can do something about it. Because for me, I find interesting when I approach another teacher like: 'would you do this section for me?' For example, I was doing map work in Maths literacy and there is a very good lady who is doing Geography and they do all these things. I asked her: 'would you do this for me just

one period?’ The learners were so excited and she come and they were, not that I don’t know it but I find that if somebody who knows so well is at hand to be used then why not ? It is not about Mr. Evange standing here in the front because he is a Maths teacher. So I gave her a chance and it made it easier for me. Actually, I learnt some new things also out of the lesson because I asked them what did you learn?

Me. I notice that a lot of the times you bring in examples from the learners other knowledge when you are teaching a concept – you sometimes do it at the beginning of the lesson or during the lesson. You bring in concepts from science and geography for example – why do you do this? What is the purpose of doing this?

T: Because I believe you cannot teach a subject alone; it has to be integrated with other knowledge and that makes it easier for the learners to see the connections and the importance of keeping the knowledge that they have learned in other subjects to help them, even in my particular subjects. The skills can be transferred you see – definitely, yes; they can be transferred. I think this puts them in a better position to understand the world because if you take practical examples from different situations and integrate them with what we do in class, mingle them with the concepts that we do in class; practical things that happens outside then they are able to make sense of what really reality is all about .

T: Do you think they then could think that Maths a subject they can use in the world?

T: Yes, for Maths they can even use it at home. For example, I was talking about measurements and I asked them how many of you have done measuring this morning; there was just a few of them. And I said what measuring did you do (laugh) they didn’t know; they just picked up their hands. Then I started the lesson by saying: ‘did you have tea this morning? How many teaspoons of tea did you put in?’ They will say maybe one or one and a half. I said: ‘why you not put the whole packet in there?’ And I told them that’s measuring. It’s just when we do it, we do it at a certain level, and we do it precisely for a particular purpose. I believe when, or if we integrate these things. it puts them in a better position of understanding.

Me. You also start off the lesson by going over previous work? Why? What do you do when learners do not know what they did the previous day?

T: Sometimes myself, I find I get intimidated when I do that, but I do that particularly for the sake that some learners may have not grasped the concept quite clearly for me to be able to continue the lesson. So I always try to cater for those learners who might not be so quick to grasp the concepts. I find it intimidating for those who are quick, but anyway I find at least everyone is on board. I would go back.

ME: But what happens if you find that half the class does not understand what you did on the previous day – what would you do?

T: I would try a different way. But then also I think for me, aah, it would really mean I need some thorough planning for that particular incident. For half of the class not to understand the concept, that speaks a lot on my side. So I would have to use somehow a completely different method to what I had explained rather than just repeating it many a times. Because if they didn't understand it, now if I repeat the same thing an hour later or the next day still it would not make a difference. That is why I say I would really have to do something about it. And such cases really happens sometimes and I do what I have said.

Me: So you are not worried about whether or not you have to cover the syllabus at the time?

T: Really, I prefer to teach them till they understand rather than moving on with the syllabus because I find that if I only am worried about the syllabus, then I would move with ten and fifteen will be left behind. From that ten, I would move with five again and then I would just be me, myself. So I believe, and also this is what I do, like I said, I set my own standard when the people come to me having not been able to finish the syllabus. I would look at the sections that I did cover thoroughly and I would assess myself on those. And even if a learner did not do so much or so well but I would be proud of myself because the section that I did well, the one that I had enough time to teach, they did well. Although I get worried a bit not being able to cover the syllabus but if I find myself doing that doing that, I find I am always behind with the syllabus. And I have tried rushing with the syllabus but my experience has been that my learner get left behind. I am so happy that I finished the syllabus but the learners, I will give them a test and I would be very discouraged to find that they did not understand. So now I find that it is better to walk with the learners than rather to walk with the syllabus. But I always try to push.

Me: But how do you explain yourself to parents and management – aren't you disadvantaging the child?

T: Ah, exactly as I am saying now, I would tell them. For me if I have five topics to teach to the learners. I would rather have three of them taught well than having five of them completed and the learner has not learned anything, because I have been rushing to finish the syllabus. It is better to know a little than nothing at all so my response would be that, and that is why I do that.

Me: Say if you were teaching at an exit level what if you were teaching matric?

T: Fortunately, I have not had an experience with Grade 12, but I think particularly, my school I think, they are doing enough to ensure they are because they do; the school finishes at three and Grade 12 stay from three until four and in that period, it is called homework period and the teacher would just come randomly but if the teacher wants to take the learners for their particular subject, they are more than welcome to do so. The school begins at 7:30 but Grade 12 begin at 7am. So I think there will be enough time to cover.

Me: At Happyville – they had homework time – did you use the time there to cover the syllabus?

T: Ja, I have but I found for Happyville, the syllabus was not that much of an issue so I would use it to help those who have not understood, or those who don't get the concept quickly and I would use the learners as well. Ask them to explain to each other, so it is more of an interactive session.

Me. When you were teaching variables you made reference to integers – why did you do this?

T: Because Maths, I believe that Maths is like walking up the stairs; every now and then you want to make connections. Because Maths is much more than one way or the other, it is about connections. To show them how this links with that and that link with this. It is important because if they are to make sense of the things out there, they would have to be able to understand these links and it all begins in the classroom and expands into the community, and then into the real life out there. So the learning becomes meaningful for them; they are seeing the links and then they can explain how they are thinking in their own words to me and to the others in the class, they can see sometimes how it links to the reality and then they can see why Maths is so important for them to know – they can use it like I said, in the measuring for example.

Me. In your way of assessing, you do the following – learners come to the board, you walk around and check learners work individually, you mark using ticks and crosses or give marks. Are you comfortable with this way of assessing? Do you think your way of assessing is an effective way for the learners and for you? How? Why?

T: Ticks and the crosses or marks? Mark being ten out ten?

Me: Ja

T: Yes, I am very comfortable with that because I find that ultimately that it is just what is done, learners are assessed in terms of what they can get in terms of marks so on. So though a little - I will just take the work and you know, just make a little comment and so on, but I find that for me to get aah, to know exactly where I am a standing rather than reading different

stories of the people that I wrote, I rather look at the spread sheet of the marks and see okay 70 people, 70 % managed to get so much. That means this person didn't so, I work backwards from that.

Me: What about the learner – do they know?

T: Also but the ticks and the marks would be for a session in class because in class you don't have so much time to write a story. You don't want to write a story for this particular learner and then learner x is getting too mischievous there. For a big class, naughty learners, you just want to be quick. But for a test maybe that, ja, I can get a chance to take home, when I am relaxed then I would be able to make a few comments. Also I know my learners; I would know those who would make stupid mistakes because they want to finish quicker. So you know the learners and this one was really struggling, and then you try to make comments and so on. So, the ticks are really would be much more useful for me in class where I have got just one hour but when I have three hours at home then I can put comments in.

Me. How do you know if all learners have acquired the knowledge or the objectives of the lesson if you call a certain number of learners up to the board?

T: I use a different, or a different ways of checking. For example, sometimes I will ask how many of you have got this and they will raise their hands, and I know that it might not be a true representation of what really happens. But I also walk around and then I collect books, maybe every three times a week, just to monitor and check so.

Me: What do you do when you realise that they haven't done the work, or they didn't understand what do you do?

T: You know, I try to make sometimes, I try to go back to the section but also it depends on the percentage of the learners who don't know because now I am teaching big classes if only three learners don't know then, but mostly what I do now that the class is so big, I use the learners. I know those ones that are so quick in certain concepts and they will be able to. And then you will find that this one is not so quick in this particular section, but this one, so I think, they are getting quite a fair chance to show themselves.

Me. During the observation, I noticed that when learners are not able to answer a question – you asked other learners to explain to that learner why his/her answer is incorrect – why do you do this?

T: My experience as a learner, I found it easy for me when my friend would explain Mathematics to me rather than the teacher. Because of the teacher, most of what I found, and I always try to avoid as much as possible if the teacher comes to ask you: 'isn't you understand this?', you find that you say yes because you don't want to disappoint the teacher.

So with my friend, I will say I don't understand and then they will explain again. So I find it easier sometimes for the learner to explain to the other learner, and also then that learner also is gaining even more because they are able to discover how much they know. Also you will find that someone got it correct in their homework, you ask them to explain what they did and to explain to the others and sometimes they really get stuck. Then you realise that someone at home helped them to get the answer and so then you get a true thing or they will say I am able to do but I am stuck here now. You just help them there and then, they also learn ways of doing the sum. So ultimately, I would say it is a two way thing.

Me: Do you think that Maths is a subject that should engage with social issues from learner's background. Learners in your class are extremely poor – how can Maths help them to understand their poverty or abuse etc. which you have said learners speak about constantly. Should Maths do this?

T: Ahem, I might be not quite confident in answering that question; I find it quite difficult. But, as I said it would begin in the class and it should expand out because if we are able to do say, bar graphs and we see that the percentage of the youth that is involved in the drugs and the danger that goes with that and then being in class, having the chance to change that because if they stick to their work, they will pass to the next Grade and to eventually to university, and they will be able to contribute positively to those poverty stricken communities. So, I would say that at least those kinds of things would really work. I really don't allow to talk about certain issues in the class because that is what they want but you know, the issue of syllabus as I have said and knowing that you have got to teach Mathematics, and the concept you rather, although the session may get interesting and you want to get carried away with it and that actually happens but I try to limit it. Sometimes you need to make a decision that that is for the outside and I can't do much really but here in the class I can, so I concentrate on that.

Me. I notice that you select the kinds of Maths knowledge that learners must know? Why? Is there a reason why you do not ask learners what they would like to know or learn? Why? (How do you feel about this?)

T: Maybe, at what stage of the lesson – I'm not quite sure I understand the question clearly.

Me: Why do you select the knowledge and not get learners to select knowledge that they feel they need to know?

T: For me, at the beginning of the lesson, I am the one who knows and has planned what knowledge must be acquired. Each and every section has got the basic things that they need to know for e.g. if I am talking about addition, they would have to know that another word

that could be used for addition is sum, so they would have to know these kinds of things. So I always try channel them or I always try to guide them towards those sorts of things but not limited to, but you know for a lesson and also for myself being able to actually see whether the learners have been able to achieve the knowledge – they have learned the knowledge. I would have to put it clearly which knowledge they would have to get otherwise it makes it easier for me to see this is what my learners should learn, this they have learned, and then this lesson has been a successful lesson but not limited to that but I find that I got to put in front, what needs to be learned. They, in fact, they would automatically learn more beyond that but the basic concepts that they need to learn I must give, that is why. I believe that out of a lesson there must be particular concept that they must learn or more than learn other things outside Mathematics that they need to link to Mathematics. But they must learn particular concepts.

Me: And you think you think learner cannot make that decision?

T: On their own? They, I would say, they need some guidance; those ones who are quicker or who are sharp, they may be able to explore that but still again they would need the teacher to intervene in terms of the abstract situations now. They would not know what the things they need to know is – that is the syllabus you see.

Me: I notice that you focus a great deal on success in your class – for you the learner must be successful in explaining their ideas and answers – for you, you say that Maths is a process and that they must think all the time – why is this important for you . Why is it important for the learner? You also ask learners to do sums using other methods – why is this so important to you and for the learner?

T: As I said, for one to be able to do all those things, they really need to be motivated. That is why I give them, in particular, as much chance possible in the front to be able to do so. Because I believe that is the only way they can be able to, you know, express themselves and being able to do those things is only if I give them a chance. Rather than if I just stand in the front and just say or give them a test. So that is why.

Me: But why for the learners – why must they be able to think or practice – why must they be able to explain their own ideas and think all the time?

T: Because they will eventually become somebody in this big world or they will have to be able to you know to motivate, to bring ideas, and they will bring responsibility and to take responsibility for their decisions and ideas. They will be able to, you know, they will have to be you know critical citizens. For the future, ja, and also for the progress because the bigger Grade will demand more. For example, when I have been teaching Mathematics, I would ask

them, maybe, I would just put a particular concept and I would ask them tell me what they know about this particular section. And they would explain particularly for the Grade Eight's, they come from different primary schools - and will say: 'my teacher taught me this way and you do it this way' and they would fight, and you know then I would intervene but they are able to defend themselves, ja.

Me: There is a body of knowledge that says that as a teacher you should do explicit/direct teaching for some students — what do you think about this?

T: I don't believe that first. Ahem, there was a learner in that school when I went; he was in Grade 10 and I actually had a chance to give him a lift and he shared with me his story and he said he is not able to learn. I asked him: 'why are you not able to learn but you are in Grade 10 now and you are saying to me that you are not able to learn.' And then he says he doesn't understand things, when he tries to read he doesn't understand and so on. And particularly, for that learner, because I knew him now and his situation. I was a camera behind him so I actually gave him a test indirectly, I gave everybody in the class that particular test. It was just for him and I could see that this learner is able to learn also – just that I didn't want to believe that he is not able to learn and you would be amazed, but the end of the term he was the one who would come regularly in the front. As you say, I bring them to the front, he would come regularly, and he was motivated. So I told him you can learn and you can actually do it. So I find that, that is why I say that for me, a Maths learner besides knowing all the concepts, they must be motivated. So, for that boy it was just motivation. He is in Grade 11 now, doing so well so it was just a maybe particular event or situation that could have happened that may have discouraged him or whatever happened and really, I believe, that somehow I brought the light back into that child. Now he is just progressing. You know that I don't teach step by step but I would rather teach for here, that is my concept, here is the thing; let's get to the answer. How do you get to the answer? And I would leave it to them. Ja, I would leave it to them and my worry would be when they don't get the answer. Not to say, I'm not so much worried that much about the answer, but I am worried about the processes and their thinking and that is why I leave it to them as I believe that they would have different ways, and different methods and it would be easier for them to have a particular method rather than my method maybe, perhaps. But also I would really want at the end of the day, to see that they have achieved this particular concept. They must explore their own thinking.

Me: You constantly tell learners to think quickly, work quickly – what happens to learners who cannot do this in class? How do you feel about learners who cannot manage the quick pace? – would you go on because some understand or not and why?

T: I find that also encourages them as well because if I tell them work quickly even in his or her own slow pace, they are able to, I am sure, they are able to multiply the pace if they see that there is a need to just hurry up a little bit. I know it gives a little bit of pressure but rather than just telling them to just work, they would not make an effort. So I find they make an effort. And I have realised that particularly, some learners who would be slow but if you sit on them eventually they become one of the quicker group. I recognise that they have - are not as quick; maybe they will not achieve the knowledge as quickly when everybody else achieves it but eventually, ja, and it tells them to.

Me: I notice that in your teaching of concepts you tended to build on learners knowledge, starting a level and then moving to the next and the next in order to help them gain a particular understanding – why is this so important to you. (Think of a concept in Maths that you taught – what did you do when teaching this do to ensure that learners learn this concept? Why did you do this in this manner?

T: For me, I believe that ahem, Mathematics aah, learners already know something now about Mathematics so I find that it is good for me to allow them to use the little or if I should say, little but if in terms of the wideness of Mathematics because even myself I regard myself as just knowing a little portion of Mathematics so if they are able to start from what they know; the little that they know and expand on it. All themselves, it is very rare that they forget the things that they have discovered themselves rather than me telling them always.

Me: Say if you have to teach a concept like integers – take me through how you would actually teach that concept – how would you start with, what would you then do and then end with?

T: I would talk about a number - just a general number because to learners an integer is a particular number and if they don't know what is a number then that lesson is getting nowhere. So they have to know what a number is. I would talk a little bit about the history of numbers, take a few maybe not limited to the local - to Africa, maybe other countries; how and what did they understand numbers for? Make it interesting for them and so on. And once they know what a number is, then I am able to tell them there are different types of numbers, there is a particular number and it is called a particular thing and why it is called that. So I would give them background and put the concept that there is a number and that number, now there are different types of numbers now according to different group or whatever you

may call it. So there must be a building up of the concept and involves as much information as they know – it is possible that they might know and I found for me, I have a got a very clever learner; I shouldn't say clever learner – a quick learner in Mathematics. He, you know, would find when I am doing some work when I didn't know the child, I would get very intimidated by him. I would be teaching and he would be facing down writing things writing this until I discovered that he is – the moment I write a sum on the board, he first wants to do it before I even explain it. So I will just give little background or ask them if necessary and introduce the things, ask them what do they realise? What do they understand? Can they make anything out of this? And then I lead them, ensuring that the concept that they have learned; that there is a number and then go on to integers. Because I can't just write integers or write this this number is an integer. What is a number first? There is logical thinking there.

Me: In the interview you spoke about cultural day events – as being disruptive to your lessons – learners were often not at school because they went to the competitions – or they were out of your class practicing – how do you feel about this? Do you think this impacts negatively on learners' academic success? Why do you think the school focuses so much on it? Do you agree with this focus? Why/Why not?

T: I find that they were given an extra opportunity. Though it was disturbing, in terms of planning as I said, schedule and everything, it is all disturbing but then you want to think. You have to think the fact that it is not all about knowing Mathematics. But being able to rather focus on the fact that they can actually link, even with whatever, even though it may not be Mathematics as such, direct. They see the importance of going for those things – those cultural things. It did impact on the learners because you want them to understand that this is also important because if we have 40 learners and ten are not in class then the results at the end are not a true reflection of what the teacher has done in the class, because they were just not there. So you know, ja. And for me not going back to teach them, it requires some time from me and therefore it disadvantages some other aspects that you should be focussing on. I didn't say anything to other teachers or anyone, reason being, as was known, we have got a year plan. We know that this particular time, there is this cultural things and events and so on and there will be disruptions and this disruptions is quite understandable. Ja.

Me; You have indicated that you do use corporal punishment. For you, you have indicated that corporal punishment is something you do to keep a balance between what parents do and what school can do – and for you it is about love and discipline – do you

not think that this is contradictory – how can you love and discipline. Are you comfortable with this understanding why?

T: You know for me as I said earlier, I would say disciplining the child is different from spoiling the child so and for me, my values are the bible. And the Bible will say I don't - I have never read the English version of the Bible but for me, the Zulu one says the stick will never kill a child. Obviously used in a proper manner; you don't want to beat the child until she bleeds; just to make sure just to show them there is punishment for the wrong that somebody does. I think my love superseded all the learners being scared of me; learners are not frightened.

M: You did not use it in the time that I was there – why?

T: There was no need. I think you realised that there is no need and the learners were intimidated by having somebody so they wanted to be, you know, because they want to be on the best behaviour.

Me: Learners are very interactive in your class. You insist on them explaining their answers or providing you with examples and even evaluating other learners work? Why is this so important to you?

T: Well, I think they would have to be able to assess themselves first, ja, and this I found fascinating, even for myself in that I would be able to assess myself in terms of my duties. So it helps me a lot. Before I have even being told by my HoD: 'hey you are late', then I know I am late so I don't get offended easily cos I know that this is the reality of that thing. So I am able to assess myself with that. I find it is nice to give the learners to be able to assess themselves and in that assessing others as well. Learners must be able to interact with me and the other class friends. How will they learn if they don't interact? And also I make sure that they talk and explain – they must say how they got the answer – how they thought about it. So they must talk to me. When they talk to their friends too, they explain so nicely sometimes better than I can so yes, they must interact.

Me: In discussion you allow learners to speak Zulu – why do you do this?

T: I believe that if a learner is confident in his own language, it makes it easier to learn other languages as well. I found that as being the case with me, I actually went into a high school – Howick Secondary and the medium of instruction was English, but I had come from a school like Happyville where English was used but isiZulu as well, was used to a great extent. So I found it easy if I understood isiZulu, then I would try it would make it easier for me to express myself in English. So I think I would, I believe that I give my learners that particular chance as well and as there are some things that a learner would not understand clearly in

English but they would understand it in their own language because they have not come across that particular word in English before or that English word but if they understand it in isiZulu they are able to transfer – when I talk about – ohh, this is it. I think, but particularly Maths, I would choose for them to be taught in English because when the exam comes it comes in English and secondly there are concepts Mathematics concepts that would not have a proper or a clear expression in isiZulu. Ja, take integers for example, I don't know it, maybe somebody knows it, but I don't know it but I find isiZulu very effective in explaining what an integer is - to use isiZulu and the children know.

Me: You focus a great deal of religion – is religion important in your teaching – why? What happens to those learners who are not Christian in the school or in the class – how do you feel about this?

T: Firstly, I don't take Christianity as a religion that's the first thing. And probably whatever I do thereafter is a result of that. For me, Christianity is not a religion because for me, Christianity is about choices as well. For me, I can pray with my eyes closed and in no way, do I discriminate against someone who prays with their eyes open. I can kneel if I want to but I don't criticise the one who is standing, so I find that there is a lot of opportunities in Christianity it just depends on how you treat it and for me, it is not I don't find that it is excluding anybody as such. For me, someone who is a Muslim being in my class - so God loved the world everybody so God loved him as well, so it is just a matter for me, it is matter of exposing the people to the different choices that are there. So for me, if you had to classify religion or to classify Christianity as a religion, I think I am narrowing it down. Whereas I believe it is wide a way of life, it is a real way of life for me.

Me: Have you lowered the standard of Maths in your class. Why/Why not?

T: I think that I am in the process of learning how to lower the standard (smiles and laughs) because you know sometimes find that learners in the class do fail and then you say that this one you really can't do much about that so ja, but I am not happy. At Happyville, I was able to cater for those particular learners because sometimes I would know the learners who are not performing very well and really, I wouldn't but I give everybody a chance but I wouldn't direct a spot on a weak learner. Because one thing they would be demotivated and everyone would just laugh all the way. They would laugh just as he stands up because they know he would never be able to do it so, then it is the ones that you find me during the lesson focussing on them, cos I know they need it. So you know so and so haven't got it – you know. I don't want standards to be lowered but I want to try and cater for everybody.

Me: Thank you so much – is there anything else that you would like to say

T: I think if there is more we can Whatsapp – you have Whatsapp? It is not easy to say which day. So Whatsapp and then can have a discussion then.

